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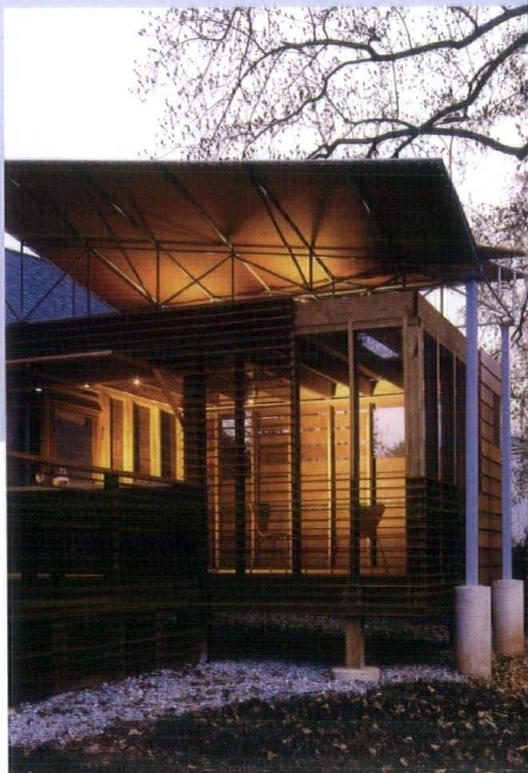
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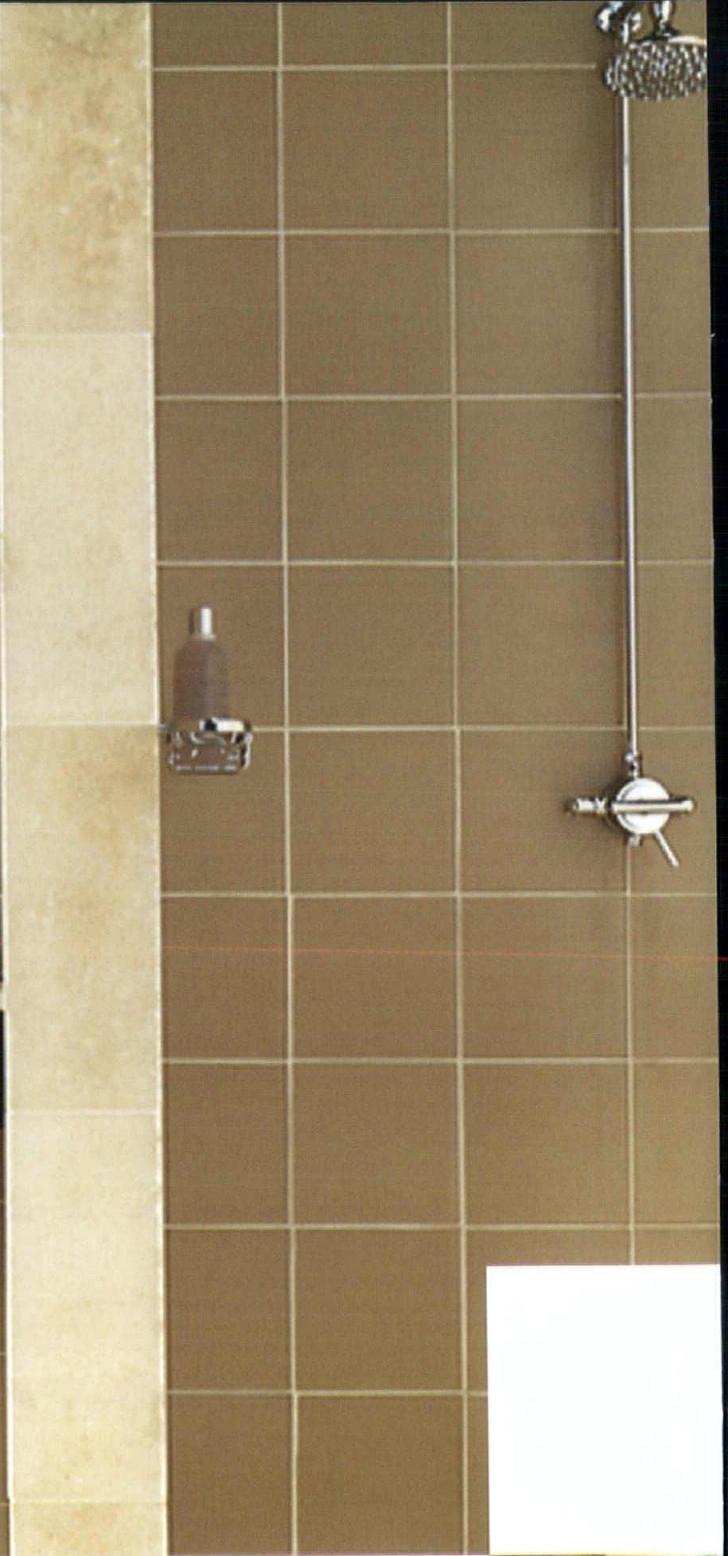
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ON THE COVER: Smith Apartment by Robert M. Gurney, FAIA.
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In this edition of *ARCHITECTUREDC*—our fifth annual residential issue—the focus is on the new DC apartment. Years ago, living in an in-town apartment was considered a stopping point on the way to becoming a fully fledged adult with a home in the suburbs. Today, however, an apartment in the city is the preferred home type for many local residents, including people who have owned homes outside the city and are moving back in to enjoy a more urban lifestyle. Follow in these pages the stories of three households—two younger couples and a previously suburban family—as they establish new apartment homes in various parts of DC. You'll see living spaces that meet every need for modern living and contribute to the fabric of the city.

Welcome

Nearly all of the homeowners whose projects are featured in this issue got started with help from AIA/DC's Architect/Client Resource Center, a collection of portfolios from more than 80 local architectural firms that you can inspect to find the best architect for your project. The 80+ firms with portfolios are listed in this issue beginning on page 54. They are also posted on our online directory (www.aiadc.com/directory), which has project pictures and links to firm websites.

This issue of *ARCHITECTUREDC* also marks the first anniversary of DetailsDC, the page in the magazine that showcases one-of-a-kind home furnishings from (mostly) DC-area stores. Retailers whose products have been featured in previous issues of DetailsDC include **Apartment Zero**, **bulthaup**, **Contemporaria**, **Icons of Design**, **Illuminations**, **Muleh**, **Stone Source**, **TableTop**, **Thomas Moser**, and **Vastu**. With this issue, we add **Xydecor**, **Home Rule**, and **da·da**. DetailsDC celebrates the fact that the market for great design is taking root all over town. The two owners of da·da, in fact, first thought about locating their store in a trendy New York neighborhood, but brought da·da here because of the growing strength of the DC-area design market.

We're pleased to announce that with this issue, *ARCHITECTUREDC* has reached a total distribution of 12,000—almost triple the figure from two years ago. It's gratifying to see that the magazine's unique focus has been so well received by local readers. We look forward to sharing more innovative DC-area architecture with you in future issues. And as you read through this issue, remember that *ARCHITECTUREDC* and AIA/DC are resources for you. We're here to help you in print, online, and in person.

Mary Fitch, AICP
Publisher
ARCHITECTUREDC

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

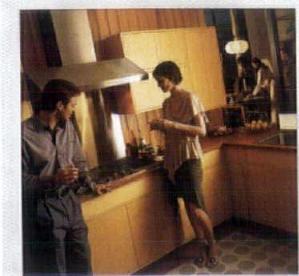
L. Catherine Hader has worked for Washington architectural firms since the mid 1980s and has written previously for *ARCHITECTUREDC*, *Residential Architect*, and *Contract* magazines. She is director of marketing and an associate principal of DMJM Design.

Tabitha Kenlon has a BA in English and an MA in Theatre. She is currently the studio assistant at Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects in Washington DC.

Denise Liebowitz has lived and worked for extended periods in Europe. Recently retired from the National Capital Planning Commission, she is an occasional contributor to and guest editor of *ARCHITECTUREDC*.

Ronald O'Rourke, a frequent contributor to *ARCHITECTUREDC*, grew up in an Eichler-built townhouse in San Francisco. His father, Jack O'Rourke, was an architect who practiced for many years in the San Francisco Bay Area. Ronald and his wife, Mary Fitch, the Executive Director of AIA/DC, live in Adams Morgan in an award-winning renovated modern townhouse designed by Robert M. Gurney, FAIA. 

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Chefs drool. Architects swoon.



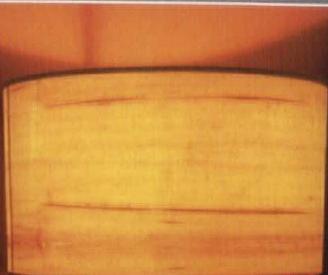
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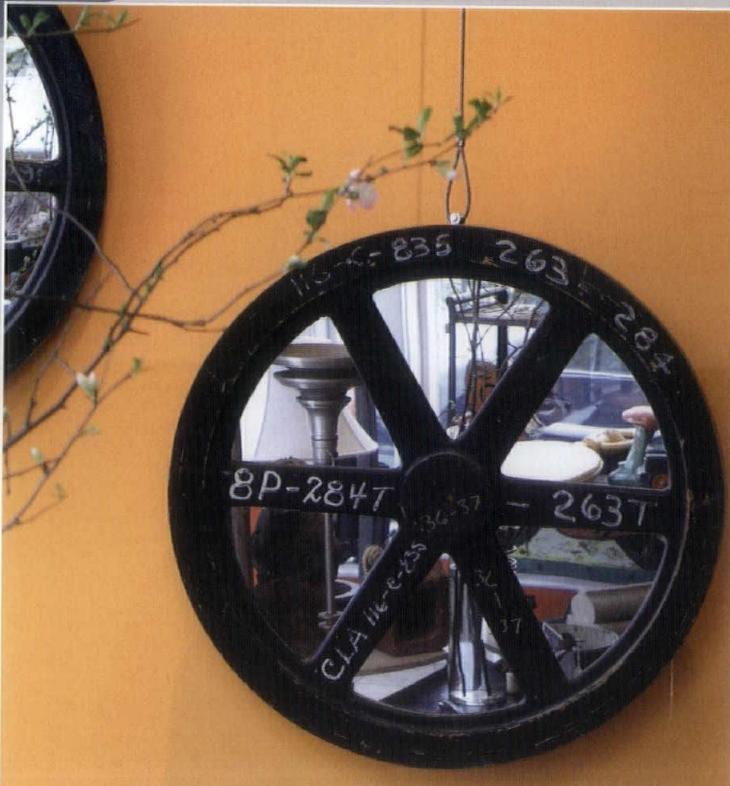
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Shine a light. Georgetown's newest design store, **XYdecor**, is a jewel box of lighting, furniture, rugs, and ceramics. The store's name refers to the x and y geometry of weaving. Started by Mukda Clark and her husband, Tim Clark, a designer with the architecture firm CORE, XYdecor sells modern beautiful objects made with traditional materials and methods. The **Thrill** floor lamp offers minimalist design with maximum appeal. Designed in Thailand by Able Interior Workshop, a small design studio run by an architect and an interior designer, the Thrill lamp is about 61 inches tall and features a shade made from a thin slice of maple, a stainless steel stem, and a leather-like base. The lamp retails for about \$475, and XYdecor is its only US distributor. Visit XYdecor at 1061 31st Street, NW, 202.339.9007, or on the web at www.xydecor.com.

Boris Feldblyum Photography



Foundry molds turn into decorative objects at **da·da**.

DetailsDC:

XYdecor

Home Rule

da·da

by Mary Fitch, AICP

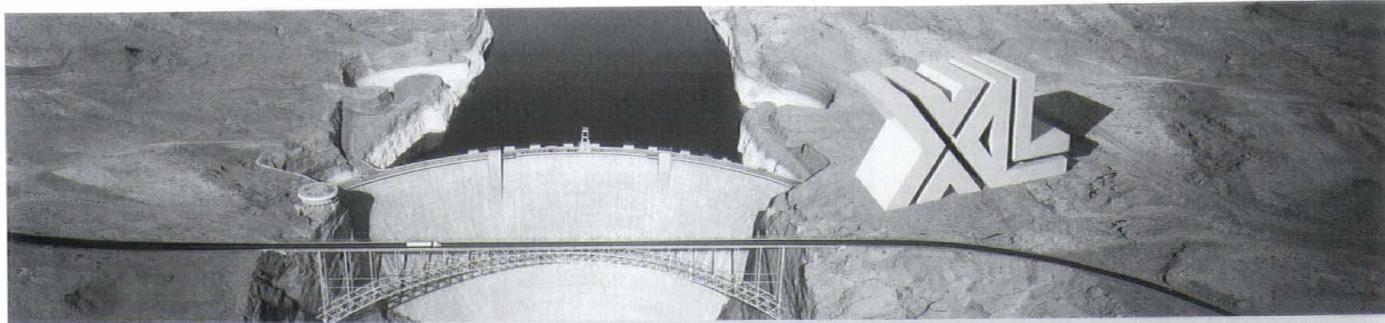


Recycled billboards make an eyecatching statement at **Home Rule**.

Get carried away. Be as fashionable as your interiors with this **DJ bag** by Vy & Elle from 14th Street's **Home Rule**. The DJ bag is made from discarded vinyl billboards. Used nationwide as temporary banners for advertisers, much of this material ends up in landfills. Because of its strength, vinyl makes an ideal product to reuse. Each bag and accessory has its own unique look and retails for about \$60. In addition to the bags, Home Rule has many other wonderful products that will turn any apartment into a trendy design statement, from nickel-plated mail boxes to the perfect demitasse set. Visit Home Rule at 1807 14th Street, NW, 202.797.5544, or on the web at www.homerule.com.

Ask yourself, what is dada? There are many answers, but one of them is a new store in Adams Morgan that features architectural details perfect for Washington loft dwellers. A collaboration of self-described art school drop-out Carter Anderson and Pixie Windsor, owner of Adams Morgan's Miss Pixies two doors away, **da·da** grew from their shared passion for auction finds. The merchandise changes regularly, but recent offerings have included great old store signs from the '30s and '40s, Norman Bel Geddes vanities, and sculptural busts, including an enormous one of Christopher Columbus. Anderson creates some of the store's most interesting pieces from found objects, turning gigantic foundry molds into mirrors and antique window grates into headboards. "I will sometimes hold on to things for 5 or 8 years until I find the perfect way to reuse them," he says. Visit **da·da** at 1814 Adams Mill Road, NW, 202.387.dada, or on the web at www.dadadecorativearts.com.

Boris Feldblyum Photography



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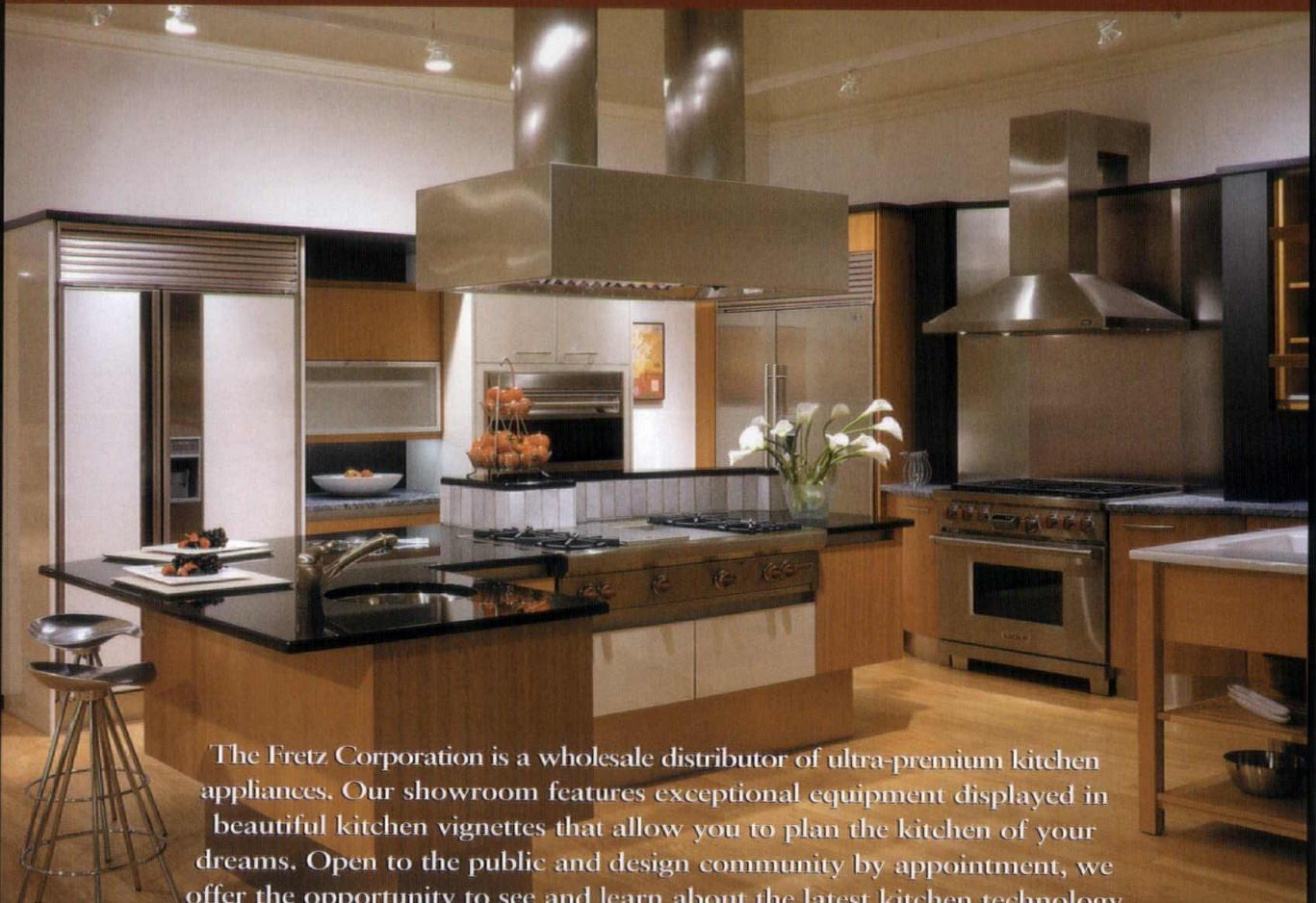
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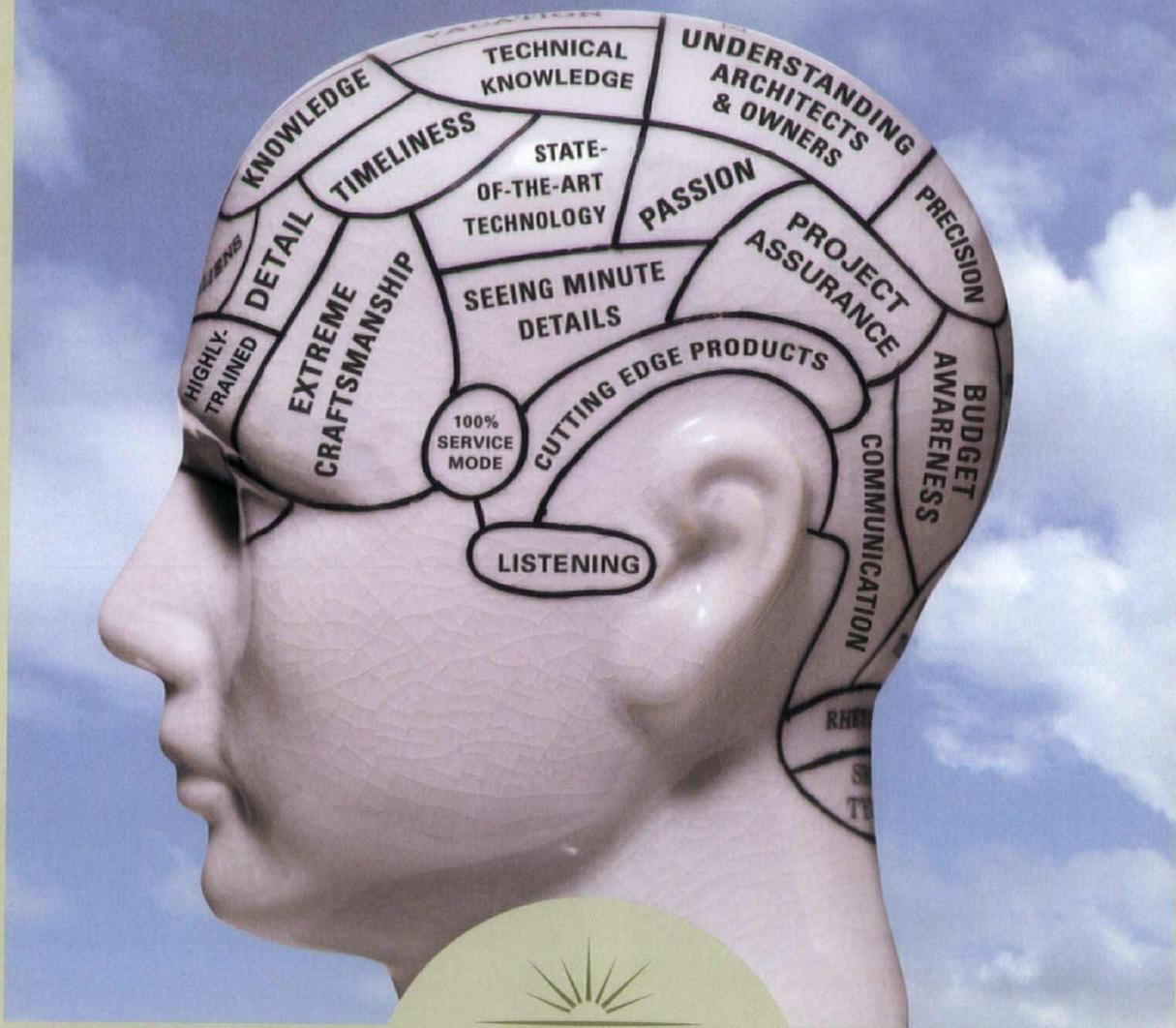


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DetailsDC

Favorite Fixtures for the Bath

compiled by Hannah McCann

Faucets, showerheads, toilets, and towelbars...to the uninitiated, they are simply necessities that go with indoor plumbing. But to anyone who has contemplated the design of a new bathroom, bathroom fixtures are the stuff of dreams. Here is where comfort, practicality, and innovation unite.

We asked 11 area architects to share their favorite fixtures, the products they love to specify in plans—or “spec”—for their clients’ bathrooms.



BainUltra Thermo-Masseur Bathtubs are lined with a ring of tiny air jets that massage your entire body, so it feels much better than a traditional whirlpool bathtub, where large jets hit you continuously in one spot. When the tub is emptied, the jets automatically go through a drying cycle to keep the channels clean. The tub's heated backrest is shaped to massage your neck and spine. For the ultimate bathing experience, an integrated LED system lights up the water with the color of your choice.

Joan Fabry, AIA
Fabry Associates Architects



What's innovative? The **Kohler Hatbox toilet**. We have not used it yet but are looking for an opportunity in the near future.

Bill Bonstra, AIA
Bonstra Haresign Architects LLP

I specify products for multi-million-dollar luxury homes and modest-priced residences, too. I have had a lot of success over the years with **Kohler's Memoirs** series of fixtures. I love the clean, well designed lines. Particularly, Kohler makes a very attractive pedestal sink in the Memoirs line. When you pair that with the brushed-nickel deck set (faucet and handles), it makes for a handsome, cohesive design solution without an overly priced effort. It is standard and can be picked up by the customer at Home Depot Expo and other hardware and plumbing houses.

Brian G Thornton, AIA, IIDA
Brian G Thornton Designs, LLC



After years of bumping elbows with my wife while teeth-brushing or face-washing, we finally found this product: the **Aquamedia double-basin sink by Lacava**. The double-basin sink uses less space than having two separate sinks, and the clean lines don't clutter up a modern bathroom.

Griz Dwight, AIA
GrizForm Design Architects



The **Wesaunard Baronial Towel Warmer** is an oil-filled, wall-mounted towel warmer that can either be operated electrically or hooked up to your radiator system. Need you ask why we spec it?

Stephen J. Vanze, AIA
Barnes Vanze Architects



Here is the product that I have always wanted to spec but haven't found the project yet: the **Spoon by Philip Watts Design**. In general, urinals are a utilitarian item that don't get designed for their aesthetics. I am intrigued not just by the urinal's shape, but by the fact that it comes in any imaginable color.

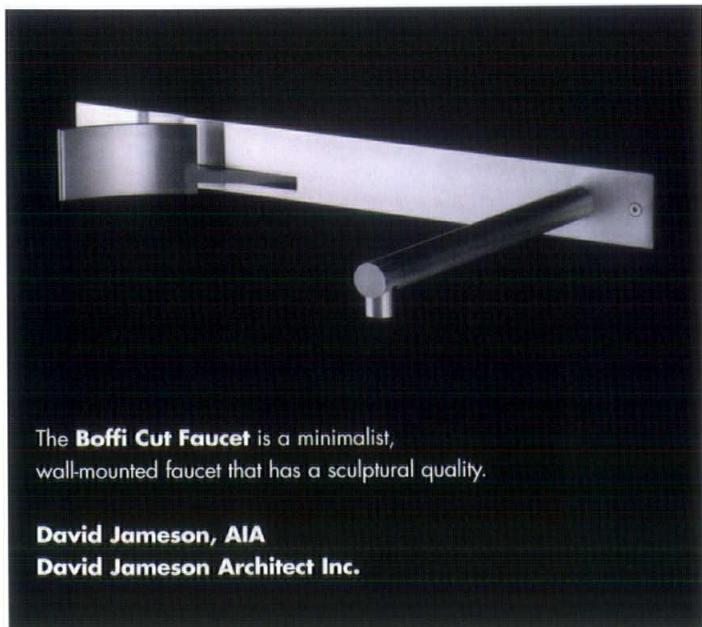
Griz Dwight, AIA
GrizForm Design Architects



Waterworks' Astoria with cross handles is a simple, traditionally inspired sink faucet. We find it appropriate in many of our projects because it recalls what plumbing fixtures were originally intended to be: clean, functional, and understated. Its modesty works particularly well with marble vanity tops and porcelain pedestal sinks.

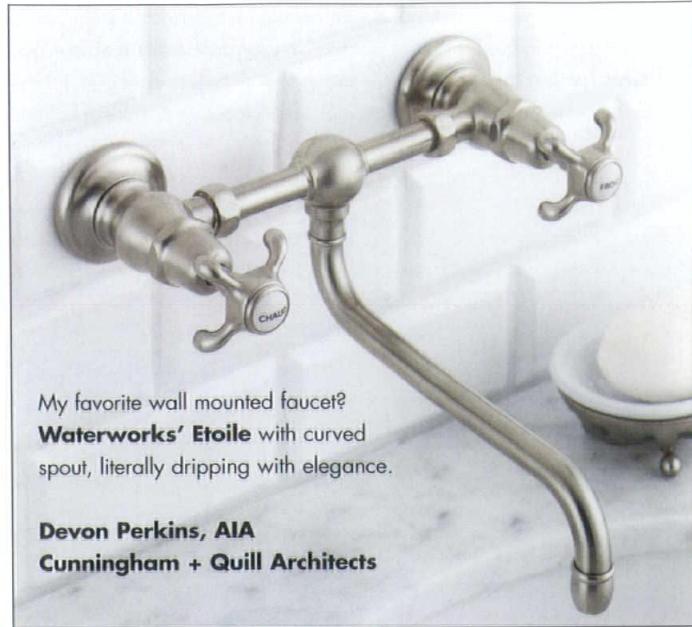
William Kirwan, AIA
Muse Architects





The **Boffi Cut Faucet** is a minimalist, wall-mounted faucet that has a sculptural quality.

David Jameson, AIA
David Jameson Architect Inc.

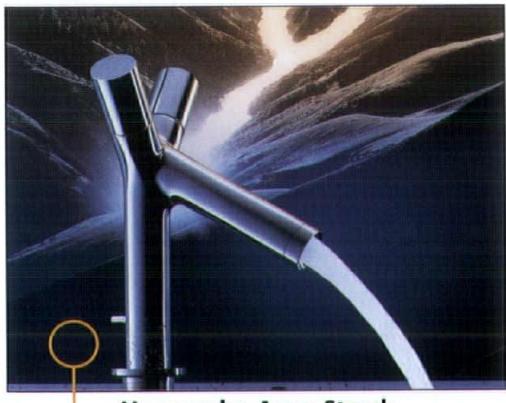


My favorite wall mounted faucet?
Waterworks' Etoile with curved spout, literally dripping with elegance.

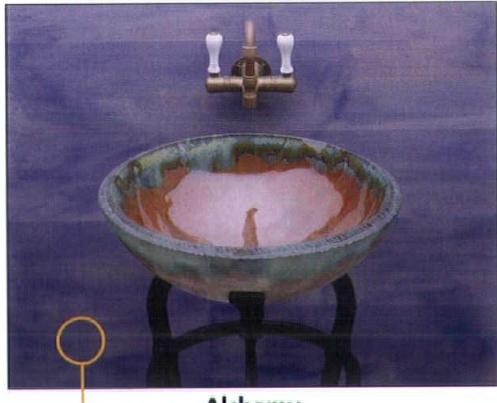
Devon Perkins, AIA
Cunningham + Quill Architects

These products are used on some of our multi-family projects such as Solo Piazza, Q14, Parker Flats at Gage School, and 2424 18th Street Lofts. Luxuries include pieces from the **Hansgrohe Axor Starck** series, **Alchemy** glass sinks, and the **Kohler Sok overflowing bathtub**. On the practical side, we like **Danze's Sonora faucet**: it's nice-looking, well priced, and the single handle means fewer holes drilled and a cleaner finished look.

Bill Bonstra, AIA
Bonstra Haresign Architects LLP



Hansgrohe Axor Starck



Alchemy



Kohler Sok



Danze Sonora



Here is the **Exposed Thermostatic Shower System from the Reserve Collection by Sigma Designer Faucetry**.

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Gregory Wiedemann, AIA
WIEDEMANN ARCHITECTS LLC

We just used a hardware system from a company in Germany called **Pauli+Sohn**. It's a **self-supporting sliding glass shower door system** that uses exposed rails and rollers. The system is functionally direct and highly precise, while the fittings are beautifully detailed and elegant. ☺

Brian Bassett
Studio27 Architecture



Grand Old Dame Gets a Makeover

Robert Gurney, FAIA, Transforms an In-Town Apartment

by Ronald O'Rourke

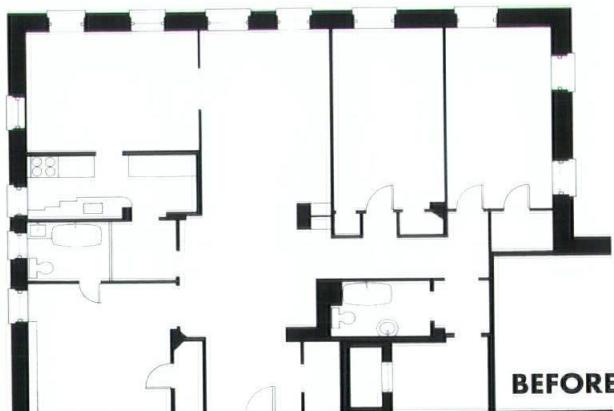
Unlike some homeowners who are contemplating renovations, David Smith didn't have the option of expanding his residence or reorienting it to take better advantage of a great view. His 1,900-square-foot condominium, located in DC's historic Wyoming apartment building (see sidebar page 21), can't be enlarged without impinging on neighboring units. And its main view is toward the back of the Washington Hilton Hotel, about 50 feet away, where, as Smith says, the only potentially interesting thing to see is the occasional pillow fight in one of the guestrooms.

But these limits didn't stop Smith from changing his apartment into something much more to his liking: a residence that is a lot more open and modern, but also warm and comfortable to live in. Smith achieved his goals by hiring Alexandria-based architect Robert M. Gurney, FAIA, whose modern and richly detailed residential designs have won many awards. Gurney transformed Smith's awkwardly laid-out apartment into a beautiful 21st-century residence.

Smith, a lawyer, and his partner Ra'ed Alawadhi, who works at Apartment Zero, a modern home furnishings store in DC's Penn Quarter district, had a clear sense of what they wanted to accomplish with the renovation.

"First, we wanted to open up the space," Smith says. "The original apartment was an odd assortment of closed-off rooms, with lots of space wasted on hallways and on these tiny, useless anterooms from another era. Second, we wanted a modern aesthetic without having to sacrifice physical comfort. My previous apartment was modern, but I thought it gave off a cold and formal vibe. Finally, since our apartment looks out onto the dreadful Washington Hilton, we wanted to focus attention on the inside."

To select an architect for the job, Smith visited AIA/DC's Architect/Client Resource Center, where homeowners can examine portfolios of local architects' work.



"I browsed the portfolios, found a handful of architects with a modern approach that excited me, and then followed up with some internet searching to check out their reputations," Smith says. "At that point, I invited two finalists to visit the space and got a better sense of their style and their interest in the project.... What tipped the scales to Bob [Gurney] was his transformation of the Fitch-O'Rourke residence [a nearby rowhouse on Calvert Street]. We both loved that project."

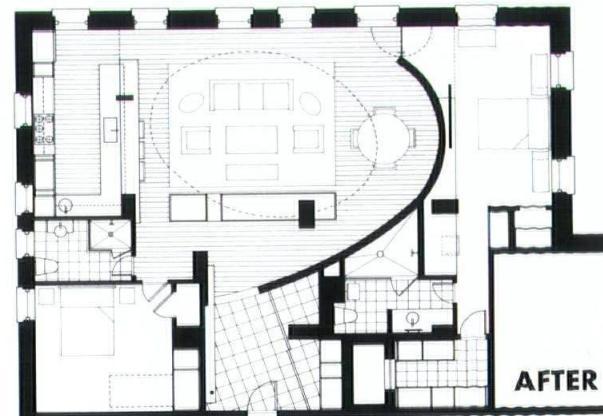
Some clients work closely with their architect during the design phase of the project, while others take a more hands-off approach. Either strategy can work; it depends on the dynamic between the client and architect. Smith favored the hands-off approach.

"I love good design, but I know that I can't spontaneously generate it myself," says Smith. "I'm a lawyer, not a designer. So I viewed my involvement in the design process as ending once I conveyed my goals to Bob. I already knew that he had an excellent reputation and that I loved his style. So why on earth would I want to muck it up with my own amateur design ideas? Bob had total freedom. I knew that we'd end up with a better project if he did."

"Both at work and among friends," Smith adds, "I have frequently been amazed to watch people hire a creative talent—a graphic designer, an interior designer, an architect, or an artist on commission—and then promptly bury the process with their own armchair thoughts. My theory is just the opposite: do your homework, hire a genius, then step back and keep quiet."

While Smith kept quiet, Gurney went to work. In addition to the apartment's fixed perimeter, Gurney was constrained by the building's plumbing stacks, which prevented moving the kitchen and the two bathrooms, and by some other fixed columns, including one right in the center of the unit.

The solution Gurney devised—a combined living-dining area defined by an elliptical wall (see before and after floor plans)—is both





simple and astonishing. The wall creates a generous and dynamic space in the center of the unit, erasing memories of the previous static, chopped-up floor plan.

The elliptical shape of the living-dining room is reinforced by an elliptical, recessed ceiling overhead (*see cover photo*). "We were asked to add a new air-conditioning system," Gurney says, "so the design also revolved around this. I wanted to leave as many of the areas as possible with a high ceiling, so I snaked the ducts around the perimeter, which is the basis of the ellipse in the ceiling." The interior of the ellipse is painted midnight blue to help it recede from view and make the ceiling there feel even higher.

The elliptical living-dining area is the unit's biggest surprise. Rather than present visitors with that surprise immediately upon entering, Gurney set up a sequence of revelation that begins in the entry foyer, where floor tiles are set perpendicular to the elliptical wall. The foyer's unexpected orientation and rich mix of materials—including blue pearl granite, perforated and black-painted steel, sandblasted glass, Brazilian cherry, mahogany, and maple—tell visitors that something special lies further inside, just beyond a freestanding cabinet wall.

"There was so much more to this project than just knocking down walls," says Smith. "Think about the usual approach to an open-plan apartment—the minute you cross the threshold, you see the entire space. In that first moment, you've seen all there is to see, and your experience of the interior is more or less finished. But when you're standing in the entrance to this project, Bob only provides a little glimpse of what's yet to come, through a little hole in a bank of cabinetry. It's like he's teasing you to take a few more steps, toward whatever is hiding on the other side of those cabinets. Only when you've abandoned your post at the entry and rounded some corners have you found the heart of our home."

Addressing Smith's requirement to focus the apartment on the interior, Gurney organized the living area inward, toward the cabinet wall, which contains a TV and stereo. "Cabinetry was an important part of the design," Gurney says. "We wanted to accommodate all of David's requirements for book storage, televisions, and stereo equipment."

Smith asked for an open kitchen that could be a centerpiece during entertaining, so Gurney turned the kitchen 90 degrees from its original orientation, facing it onto the living-dining room. On the other end of the unit, Gurney used the back surface of the elliptical wall to help shape the master bedroom suite, which includes a small office area that Smith requested.

Smith's approach of staying quiet while Gurney designed his solution paid off. When Gurney showed him the design, Smith says, "It was love at first sight."

The finished apartment pleases Smith even more. "When you're looking at the design on paper, you really get no sense of the materials or colors," he says. "But it's Bob's rich mixture of

Maxwell MacKenzie Photography

For easy entertaining, Gurney turned the kitchen to face onto the living-dining room. The leather-covered coffee table doubles as extra seating during parties.





Hiring an Architect: A Smart Investment

Homeowners contemplating a construction or renovation project sometimes assume that hiring an architect is a luxury item with an uncertain payoff. But as David Smith understood, hiring an architect is a smart investment with a high return.

An architect can design a new home to take advantage of environmental factors such as sun orientation, which can reduce heating and cooling costs, as well as available views. An architect can design your home to include only the spaces you want, with fewer wasted spaces that cost money to build. And if the architect's design is distinctive and beautiful, like Gurney's design for David Smith, hiring an architect could pay off in a big way in terms of elevated resale value.

But there are other practical returns from hiring an architect, as Smith notes.

"Bob brought a contractor to the project who already had experience working with Bob's complex designs. This was great from my point of view. For one thing, the typical owner who doesn't use an architect has a huge information gap about the reliability and quality of any proposed contractor. But in my case, Bob already knew from first-hand, prior experience that this contractor had excellent workmanship, could handle the design, and could deliver the job on time.

"Also, the contractor was sufficiently familiar with the ins and outs of Bob's design to offer me a firm, fixed price. So there was no risk to me of cost-overruns. The contractor looked at Bob as a source of future work. As a result, the contractor was very responsive to issues that arose, and reasonable when it came to pricing change orders.

"Finally, with an architect, I avoided all the construction-administration details. I think of all the times I've had to run home from work for the cable guy or the phone company. But for this project, I literally can't recall a single day that I had to leave work to attend to the construction. When you consider the scope of what was going on inside my apartment, that's really incredible."

—R.O'R.

materials that breathe so much life and warmth into our space. That was a real joy to discover. Also, when you're staring at a floor plan for an entire project, you can't help but contemplate the big picture. So it was fun to discover that small spaces themselves showed off a lot of design. I mean, who would've thought that a bathroom vanity could be all that interesting? Not me, until I was actually staring at it. Finally, I have to mention that our building is 100 years old. I never dreamed that such an extreme makeover was possible for such a wrinkled old dame."

To furnish the apartment, Smith worked with Gurney's wife, Thérèse Baron Gurney, ASID, a noted interior designer. Since Smith likes to entertain, the living room includes a leather-covered coffee table that can double as extra seating when several guests are present. "The furnishings were a hugely integral part of this project," Robert Gurney says. "I think they look and work amazingly well."

But what do others think about putting such a modern unit inside this historic building? "Well, everyone raves, but of course we know that this design is not for everyone," Smith says. "A lot of people, especially in Washington, find comfort in the mainstream. That will never be us. Many people in Washington have a knee-jerk belief that modern design is necessarily impersonal and cold. As with all stereotypes, that's not always true. I love that our place is both clearly modern and, at the same time, warm and inviting."

"I like the fact that the apartment is such a surprise, given the traditional public spaces in the building," says Gurney. "Despite its prewar construction methods and outdated floor plans, the building clearly lends itself to conversion." Renovations like this one, Gurney believes, show how older apartment buildings like the Wyoming can be adapted to modern lifestyles.

For others contemplating similar apartment renovations, Smith offers this advice: "Ninety-nine percent of your effort should be spent on the architect-selection process. Find a portfolio that you love and investigate the architect's reputation. Then meet him in person to make sure you click. It's also important to take a prospective architect to the site and see if there's a spark between the architect and the project. My first words to Bob on the telephone weren't, 'I'm interested in hiring you,' but 'I wonder if you'd be interested in my project.' You don't want to hire someone who's not inspired by the possibilities. Once you've found your genius, step back and stay out of the way."

"One more thing," Smith adds. "Let go of the past. I'm specifically thinking of some surprised looks we got in connection with our demolition of the original hardwood floors and all the thick trim around the windows. Before hanging a chair rail, you need a better reason than 'That's the way it's always been done before.'"

Smith Apartment

Architect: Robert M. Gurney, FAIA

Contractor: M.T. Puskar Construction Co., Inc.

Above: The freestanding cabinet wall, with built-in TV and stereo, focuses the living-dining room inward, away from the drab view outside. **Below:** The back surface of the elliptical wall helps define the bedroom, with its small office at rear.

Maxwell MacKenzie Photography



The Wyoming and Dresden: Two of DC's "Best Addresses"

The Wyoming and the Dresden (featured in the next article, "Some Assembly Required"), two of DC's grand old apartment buildings, are featured in *The Best Addresses*, James M. Goode's book on DC's most beautiful and historic apartment houses, which you can purchase easily through AIA/DC's website, www.aiadc.com.

The Wyoming, at 2022 Columbia Road, NW, was built in three stages between 1905 and 1911. It was designed by B. Stanley Simmons, AIA, who worked as an architect in DC for 40 years, designing banks, office buildings, schools, and more than 60 apartment houses. The Wyoming includes a magnificent entrance lobby of marble columns and beautifully detailed plasterwork—the finest surviving Beaux Arts apartment house lobby in the city, according to Goode. "Although the rooms in many apartments are spacious," Goode states, "their plans are often awkward and there is little interior detailing of note." Robert Gurney's design for the Smith apartment is a modern solution to that shortcoming.

In the years before World War II, the Wyoming was home to many prominent DC residents, the most famous of which were Dwight and Mamie Eisenhower, who lived there in 1927-1928 and again in 1929-1936, when Dwight was an Army major. The building was threatened with demolition in 1979 by a plan to raze both it and two adjacent apartment buildings to make room for an expansion of the Washington Hilton Hotel. Tenants and citizen groups, including the Kalorama Citizens Association, opposed the expansion, and the DC Zoning Commission ruled against it. The Wyoming's exterior was designated a historic landmark in 1981, and its lobby was similarly designated in 1983. The building was converted to condos in 1982, and about one-third of the apartments were renovated at that time, with new kitchens and closets added.

The Dresden, at 2126 Connecticut Avenue, NW, was built in 1909 by developer Harry Wardman. It was designed by Albert H. Beers, who served during the last seven years of his life (1904-1911) as Wardman's chief architect. Beers designed 71 apartment houses that are located in various parts of the city.

The Dresden is designed in the Georgian Revival style. It and its sister building, the Northumberland, which Beers designed and Wardman built the same year, feature outstanding interior woodwork and plasterwork that proved so expensive that Wardman never attempted it on any of his subsequent apartment buildings. (See the parquet floors, which Barr-Kumar Architects Engineers have rehabilitated, in the unit featured in the next article.)

The most notable feature of the building's exterior is its graceful curved facade, which "ranks as one of the most distinctive and handsome in the city," according to Goode. Apartments on the curved section have rooms that are slightly pie-shaped.

Notable residents of the Dresden over the years include Nellie Tayloe Ross, the first female U.S. governor (of Wyoming, from 1925 to 1927), and Julia Grant Cantacuzene, the granddaughter of President Grant. Cantacuzene was born in the White House in 1876 and died in the Dresden in 1975 at the age of 99. In between, she married the grandson of Tsar Nicholas I and lived with her husband in Russia from 1899 until the revolution in 1917.

The Dresden remained relatively unchanged from its early years until its conversion into condominiums in 1974, when architect

Peter Voghi made some changes to the floor plan and the roof garden was rebuilt, making it one of the best of any DC apartment house.

Self-Guided Walking Tour

The Wyoming and Dresden are two of several beautiful early-20th-century apartment buildings in DC's Kalorama-Adams Morgan area that can be toured easily on foot in less than an hour. Take Metro's Red Line to the Woodley Park-Zoo/Adams Morgan station on Connecticut Avenue. Walk south on Connecticut, crossing the Connecticut Avenue bridge over Rock Creek Park. (The bridge itself is a beautiful 1907 structure that is listed in the Historic American Engineering Record). A block beyond the bridge is a cluster of several magnificent apartment buildings, including the Dresden.

Continue walking another block or so on Connecticut, past the final mansion on the left, now used by the Russian Embassy. Turn left after passing the mansion, and continue around, onto Columbia. The Wyoming is just ahead on the right, above the Washington Hilton.

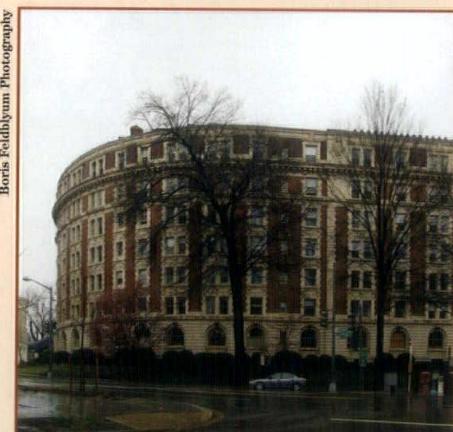
Continue north on Columbia for a few blocks to view several more grand old apartment buildings on either side of the street. As you get close to the intersection of Columbia and 18th Street, in the heart of the Adams Morgan neighborhood, note the new Kalorama Park apartment building at 1836-38-40 Columbia, by Balodemas Architects, which appeared in the On The Boards section of the previous issue of ARCHITECTUREDC (viewable at www.aiadc.com). Balodemas designed the building in a neoclassical style that is intended to work with the early 20th-century apartment buildings around it.

At the intersection with 18th Street, turn left and follow the street around the curve as it turns into Calvert Street. Drop by da·da, the new home furnishings store featured in DetailsDC on page 7 of this issue. Then cross the Calvert Street bridge over Rock Creek Park, taking in the view of the park and the Connecticut Avenue bridge, to return to the Metro stop.

--R.O'R.



The Wyoming at 2022 Columbia Road, NW



The Dresden at 2126 Connecticut Avenue, NW



Some Assembly Required

Transforming Rooms Into a Home

by Tabitha Kenlon

Michael and Naomi Quigley wanted to move. While they and their 15-year-old daughter loved their home in Bethesda's Westmoreland Hills, nearby construction was becoming bothersome and the traffic seemed to get worse daily. Wouldn't it be nice if Michael didn't have to drive to his office on Dupont Circle? Wouldn't it be convenient to walk a few blocks for shopping, dining, and museums? And honestly, wouldn't it be wonderful to downsize a little? The couple discovered the answer to all these questions in their new home—a top-floor condominium in the Kalorama neighborhood of Washington DC.

While many families leave the city for the suburbs, the Quigleys are ready to do the reverse. Naomi Quigley enthuses about city-life amenities like walkable attractions, and reports that her daughter now can't wait to go shopping in Adams Morgan and Georgetown and to take the Metro to school.

The family started their search for a condo, open to anything. Other than location, the most important factor was the number of bedrooms. They wanted three: one for Michael and Naomi, one for their daughter, and one that would double as an office and a guest room.

Modern colors pair with salvaged antique light fixtures to illuminate the entry hall of this newly renovated unit in the Dresden. Original parquet floors were restored throughout the apartment.



Sharing Spaces: Transoms carry light from the master bedroom into the master bath. Glacier glass blurs the separation of rooms.

Naomi adores historic buildings, and she'd fallen in love with the Dresden upon her first visit, before they were even looking for a condo. Completed in 1912, the Dresden is one of famed builder Harry Wardman's first luxury apartment structures. Wardman is responsible for many of Washington DC's signature buildings, including the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel and the British Embassy Ambassador's Residence. When the Quigleys found a unit in the Dresden that met all their criteria, they couldn't resist. Even though the apartment would require six months of work, cramped temporary quarters in a one-bedroom at the Park Hyatt Residences, and more than a few discussions about a golden wall, the Quigleys had a home.

Downsizing for the move was a challenge. "We had things in the attic we didn't even remember having," Quigley admits, but she describes the process as ultimately cathartic: "You don't need as much stuff as you thought you did." She estimates that about one-third of their furniture was sold or given away. She donated some furniture and her daughter's childhood toys and clothes, and sold other items to the family moving into their old home.

The hardest part was getting the new apartment ready for habitation. Renovating a space with such an important past required an imaginative and attentive architect. Raj Barr Kumar, FAIA, RIBA, principal of Barr-Kumar Architects Engineers PC, was recommended by the Quigleys' architect friend Shalom Baranes, FAIA, and was subsequently hired.

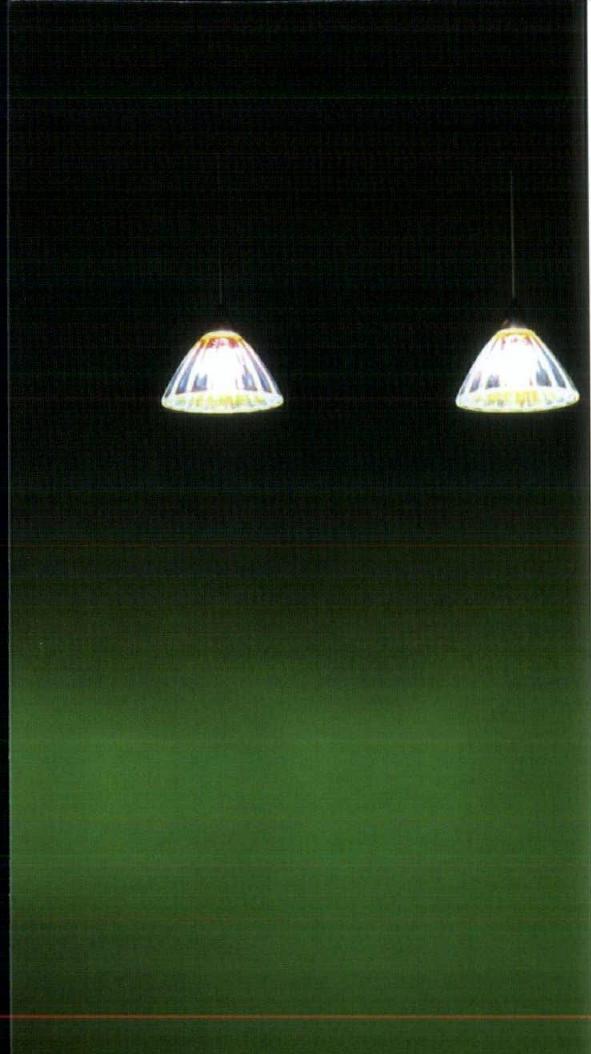
"The project has elements of restoration and preservation in it," Barr says. The pet-stained parquet wood floors were

repaired with pieces hand-cut to fit. Missing or damaged molding was recreated. The electrical and plumbing systems were completely redone. The unit was the first in the building to have its ninety-five-year-old windows replaced, which required approval from the Historic Preservation Review Board. A once-hidden skylight was revealed when the ceilings were returned to their full height of nine feet, eight inches.

With the ceilings higher, storage space could be added by constructing tall cabinets in the kitchen, and the closet space doubled by adding two rows of hanging rods, one above the other. Bathrooms were rearranged; the powder room, originally accessed via the bedroom, now has a door off the main hallway, leaving the bedroom's occupant in peace.

Since her last house's decor was "modest and traditional," Quigley was thrilled to have an opportunity to experiment with bold color. Her daughter's room is bright blue, with a bathroom done in a contrasting blue and green. The master bath is tiled in sleek ceramic gray and has glacier glass doors and transom windows to allow natural light from the bedroom into the space.

While Barr oversaw the construction, Quigley scoured estate sales and local antique shops for the perfect fixtures. Located on 18th Street in nearby Adams Morgan, the Brass Knob proved a wonderful resource for a variety of architectural antiques. The store specializes in antique hardware, restored lighting, stained glass, and many other decorative items. (A block away on Champlain, its fellow store, The Back Doors Warehouse, stocks larger items,



such as doors, bathtubs, sinks, radiators, and iron fencing.) All her searching was worthwhile: Quigley found wonderful wall sconces, 1910 glass doorknobs, and Art Deco light fixtures. In a stroke of luck, Quigley found four matching hanging Art Deco light fixtures; with Barr's approval, they were immediately procured for the entry hall.

Decades after its debut, Art Deco remains enormously popular. Known for its simple, sleek, geometric lines, the Art Deco look flourished mainly in the years between the two world wars, drawing inspiration from sources as disparate as Cubism and ancient Egyptian civilization. The distinctive designs found their way into almost every facet of life, from architecture to furnishings to fine art to the now-iconic travel posters of looming steamers and speeding trains.

Neither Quigley nor Barr wanted to mimic or re-create an Art Deco apartment as though they were Hollywood set decorators. This home would be modern, particularly the kitchen and bathrooms, but with touches that evoked the streamlined elegance of that period style. Certain vibrantly colored walls contrast harmoniously with pale glass fixtures and unobtrusive metal detailing. The colors are not overpowering, though, as a careful balance of enthusiasm and restraint is maintained throughout.



The front entrance originally looked down a long, dark green hallway into the galley kitchen. Now, a view of an expanse of yellow, illuminated by the line of antique Art Deco hanging light fixtures, ends on a golden wall. Barr and Quigley wanted the hallway to be bright and inviting, but the first choice of yellow turned out to be a little too bold, so they selected a slightly softer shade to replace it.

The end of the hall, once the door to the kitchen, was closed off to become a pantry on the other side, adding much-needed storage space. With the door sealed, though, there was a wall that could easily lend even more interest to the entry. At first, red paint was chosen. But Barr thought red was too traditional an accent color for Quigley's self-described eclectic taste, so he suggested a luminous gold. Quigley admits she needed to be convinced that the shade would work in the space, especially in conjunction with the long yellow hall. It took "many meetings," she says, and all of Barr's persuasive powers, but in the end she agreed and now adores the unique glow it gives the corridor.

With the original kitchen door closed, the new entry takes a visitor down the hall and first through the living room, with its custom-built bookshelves, and then into the dining room, boasting beautiful views and more antique light fixtures. The wall that once separated the dining room from the kitchen was opened and now provides the entrance to the kitchen, with a new marble counter and a sliding glacier-glass window above it.

Though small, the kitchen has a wealth of amenities, including a floor-to-ceiling wine refrigerator, tall wooden cabinets to maximize storage space, and a six-burner Viking gas stove. Quigley loves to cook and wanted amenities that would make entertaining simple. The taller appliances, which had once lined the wall that is now a pass-through and door, are against the facing wall. The sink has been moved to reside under the window—the view makes dishwashing almost enjoyable (but there is an electric dishwasher by the door for larger loads). Quigley indulged in a longtime desire for marble countertops. Although the Italian Carrera stone requires attention and maintenance, the results are well worth it.

Quigley has supervised renovations in her previous home as well. There, work was done bit by bit, one room at a time. "There was almost always a project going on," she says. While doing everything at once has been somewhat exhausting, she's glad it will all be done and she'll be free to enjoy what she worked so hard to achieve. It is the experience of previous renovations that led her back to Jerry De Santis of De Santis Designs for the custom wall unit in the living room. He created a maple bookcase and entertainment unit that spans the entire wall, incorporates an antique mantel, and allows space for quite a few books and a flat-screen TV—another blend of classic with modern.

An antique dresser finds a new home with contemporary bath fixtures and bold color.



Boris Feldhym Photography

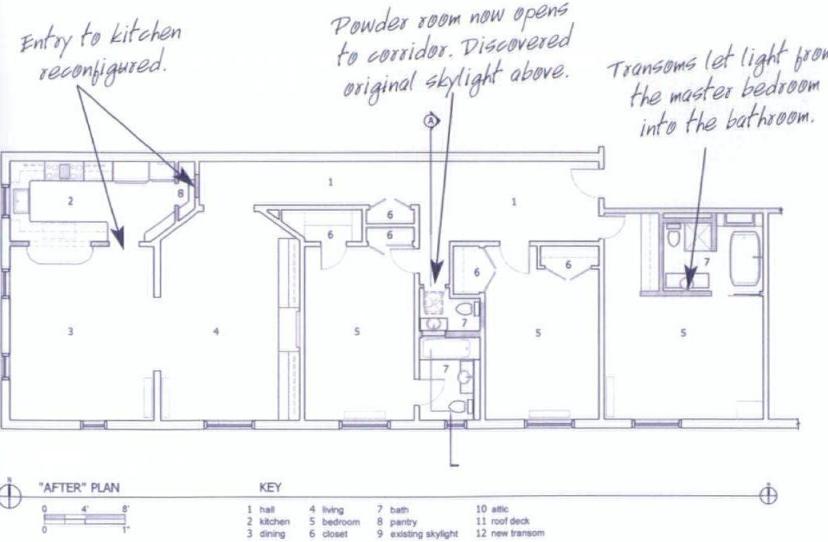
Barr has a great deal of experience balancing old and new. He designed Ardeo Restaurant and renovated the Bombay Club and the Oval Room, all here in Washington DC. This work has helped him develop a sense for creating a unique impression in intimate quarters. "In a small space," he explains, "every sensation will be heightened." A mood can be easily established through levels of lighting and a splash of color.

Now that the painstaking drafting, drawing, discussing, and adjusting has ended, the apartment is ready for occupancy. The sound of steps in the grand hallway, the peals of laughter as guests revel in Naomi's stories of hours spent staring at different shades of yellow—these will be the finishing touches that complete the transformation from house to home.

Quigley Residence

Architect: Barr-Kumar Architects Engineers PC

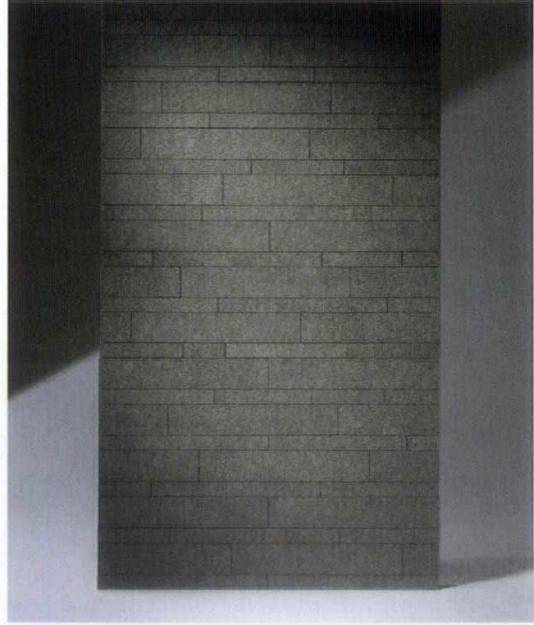
Construction Management: Barr-Kumar Architects Engineers PC



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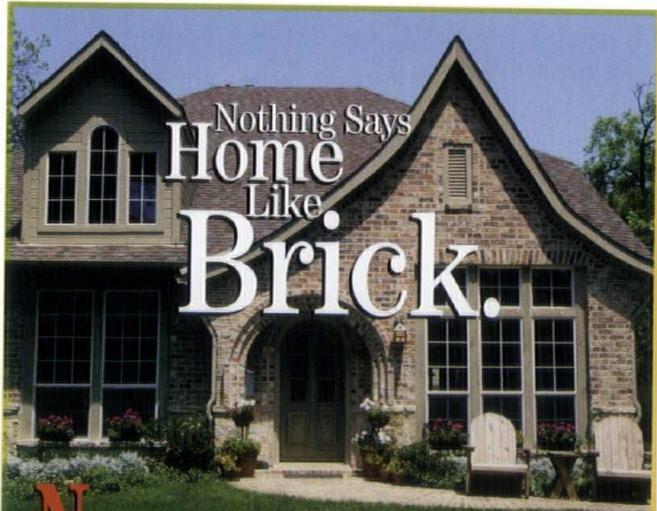
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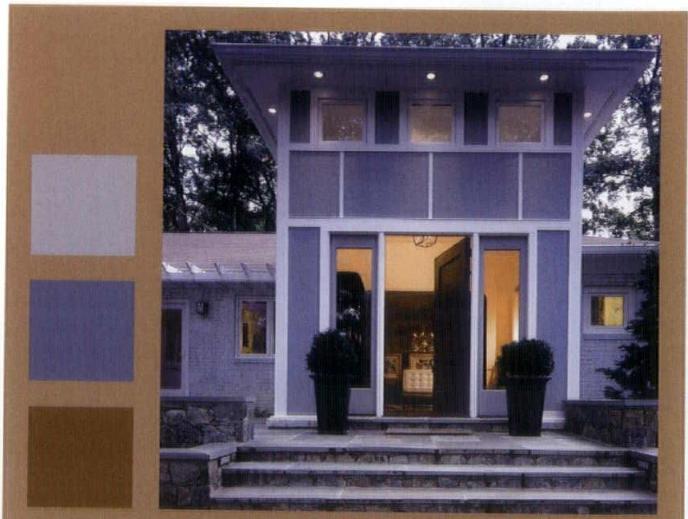
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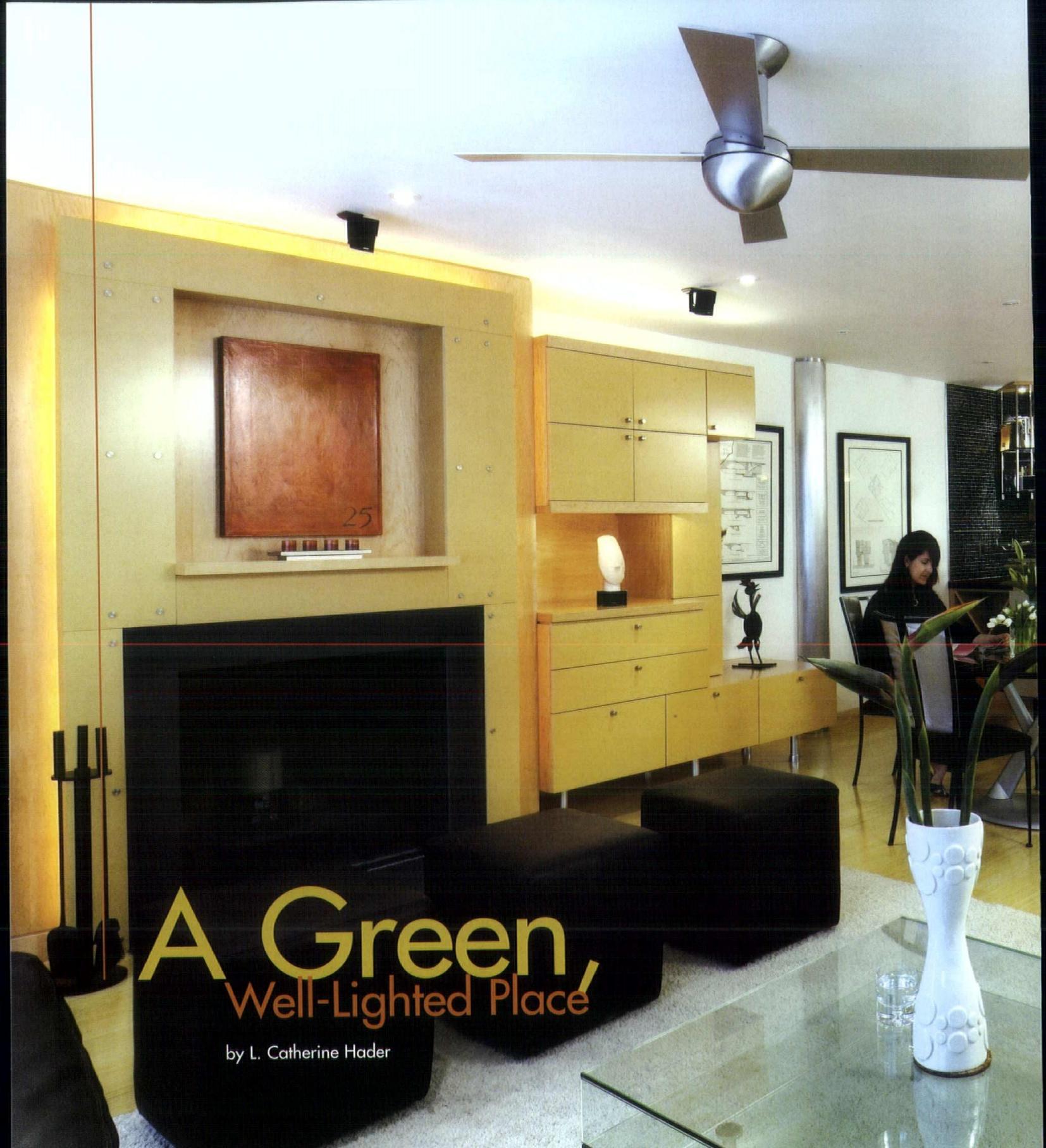


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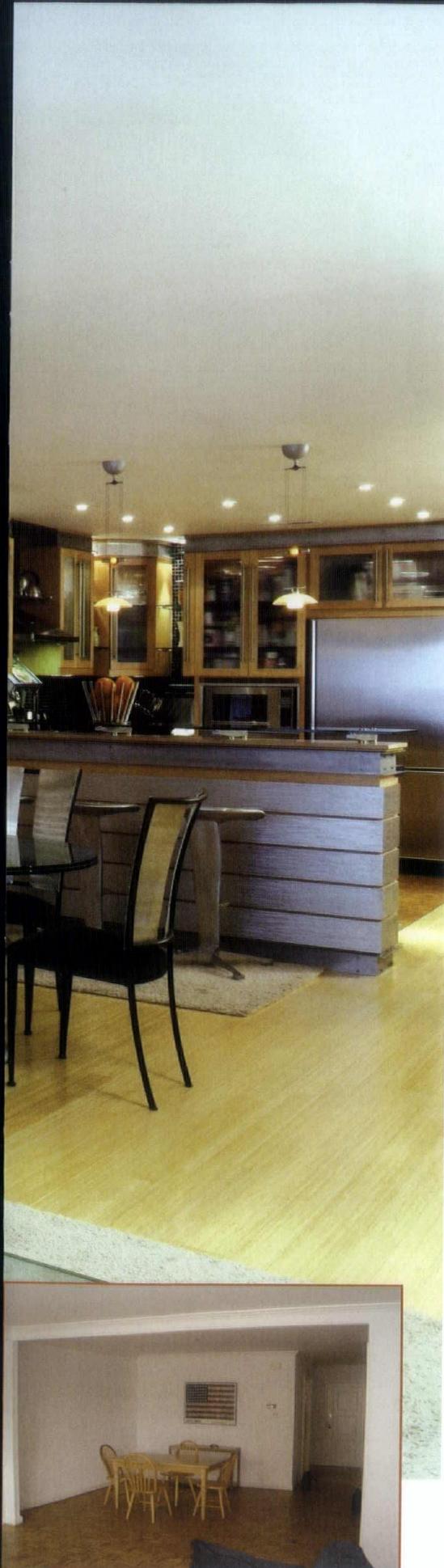
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A Green, Well-Lighted Place

by L. Catherine Hader

Shelley Cohen enjoys the new open living/dining/cooking space.



Boris Feilbyum Photography

Newlyweds and urban dwellers Mike Gala, AIA, an architect, and Shelley Cohen, an environmentalist, have transformed their two-story Cathedral Heights condominium from staid to stunning, upending its traditional Washington design. Within a six-story, 1977 condominium apartment building, they have realized their vision—a contemporary urban space, flexible for living and entertaining, affordable, and environmentally friendly in materials and construction.

On the first level of their unit, walls and bulkheads that once defined kitchen, dining, and living room areas have been minimized or eliminated. Parquet has given way to a sheen of pale bamboo flooring. White kitchen cabinets and counters have been replaced with a sleek system of wood, glass, concrete, and metal. Crown molding has vanished.

Custom cabinetry, designed by Gala in collaboration with Cohen, also opens up the space. These pieces eliminate the need for additional furnishings; they also afford convenience and flexibility by serving multiple functions, a model for urban apartments everywhere.

The peninsula that separates the kitchen from the living area, for example, doubles as a dining surface. In the living/ dining area, the entertainment center consolidates and conceals the couple's electronics and storage. Its fireplace centerpiece adds warmth and visual appeal, and its niche above personalizes the space with a painting they acquired on their honeymoon in Australia and New Zealand.

Upstairs on the second level, the couple has created what they call the "ultimate functional living and storage space" of two bedrooms, two baths, and a utility area for washer, dryer, and kitchenette.

Here too they have integrated storage with their living space. Each bedroom has a full wall of custom-designed and -constructed cabinetry from ceiling to floor. Recessed halogen ceiling lights eliminate the need for lamps. "The victory of the upstairs is the storage space," says Cohen.

They also have utilized the existing layout to its greatest efficiency. Sliding doors rather than standard doors, open or closed, free up valuable space. They've further conserved space in the bathrooms, which back up opposite each other against a shared



Before: View from living area toward kitchen.

central interior wall. Niches in the shower and bath walls hide shampoos, soaps, and sundries.

In the hall between the two bedrooms, sliding doors of "sparkle glass" conceal a compact space housing a washer, dryer, storage, and kitchenette. Sparkle glass—layered glass with textured inner surfaces—obscures visibility and masks fingerprints.

"The entire place is like a large piece of furniture," Gala says. "We've used every inch" to organize belongings and create maximum usable space.

A desire for daylight also drove the upstairs design. In contrast to downstairs, where they removed walls to open the space and flood it with light, privacy demanded alternate approaches to bring light to the interior.

In another home, skylights might have provided the solution. On the fourth floor with two stories above and fixed exterior walls, however, the only possible solutions had to derive from what was in place.

Gala and Cohen found two: first, each bedroom, one on either end of the floor, has two windows on an exterior wall. To relay light from these sources to the interior, they opted for full length translucent glass panes in the sliding bedroom doors.

Second, they've inserted a narrow window of glass block in the shared wall between the bathrooms. Light is transmitted from one side to the other, yet the thickness of the block maintains privacy.

Throughout the project, the couple has used their professional experience to weave "green" elements into the overall fabric of the renovation. Gala routinely integrates energy- and resource-conserving measures with building design in his work. Cohen works with public and private clients to develop renewable energy and energy conservation projects.

With these backgrounds, they identified areas in which they could achieve the greatest environmental benefits and savings. Building materials and appliances were a natural focus; demolition also held potential savings. "You have to look at the project holistically," observes Cohen, "and decide what levels you want to reach. Then you try to find the processes, materials, and appliances that will help you meet your goals."



Upstairs, looking toward the master bedroom, sparkle glass doors slide to reveal or hide utility area.

Boris Feldblyum Photography



Kitchen counter/dining: stools are fabricated from recycled aluminum tractor seats.

Boris Feldblyum Photography



Master bath: glass block transmits daylight to and from adjoining bath in guest bedroom.

Boris Feldblyum Photography



Boris Feldblyum Photography

Using sources including the internet, product showrooms, and magazines, the couple researched and identified ways to lessen their environmental impact. Most products were readily available locally. *See sidebar.*

The renovation was six months in the planning as work and daily life permitted. Construction, phased by floor, totaled 14 months.

With the renovation now behind them, the seasoned Gala and Cohen assess what they've accomplished and what they've learned about renovations and green design.

For renovations in particular they suggest adding a 10% contingency cost for "hidden opportunities"—unforeseen conditions that demand a creative response—and another 10% for changes. Even the best planned and designed details, once constructed, may disappoint in execution.

They also recommend being familiar with the drawings. As client or architect, you need to assess whether the construction reflects what was drawn. If something is in the drawings, it should be in the construction, and vice versa.

For those contemplating sustainable design, they found green products to be comparable in price to traditional building products, with one possible exception: wood certified according to Forest Stewardship Council guidelines, they estimate, is roughly 20% more expensive than other wood. They also suggest that contractors should be chosen with care. "We found resistance from some contractors," says Gala. "One contractor, unfamiliar with the materials we had specified, questioned whether their quality would affect his ability to execute quality work."

What they've come to appreciate most about this experience is the way everything has come together, the result of extensive planning and research. Together they've built a strong foundation to sustain them through the future. ☺

Gala/Cohen Residence
Architect: Mike Gala, AIA
General Contractor: Ferris LLC
Custom Millwork and Cabinetry: Denniston Industries

Sustainable Solutions

- **Demolition.** Drywall, fixtures, and appliances not slated for reuse were donated either to local families or to organizations like GreenHOME (www.greenhome.org) for use in low and moderately priced housing.
- **Walls.** Low VOC (volatile organic compound) paint. Quick drying. No detectable paint odor the day the condo was painted. Tile in upstairs baths is manufactured using environmentally friendly practices.
- **Flooring.**
Kitchen: Cork tile. Harvested without harming the tree; regenerates quickly. Anti-bacterial, sound retardant, and "give" under pressure make it ideal for any heavily trafficked area and for chefs standing for long hours in the kitchen. Affixed to the concrete slab floor with non-toxic, water-based glue; sealed with an environmentally friendly sealant.
Living/Dining Area, Bedrooms, and Upstairs Hall: Bamboo. Strong, durable material; regenerates quickly when harvested. Installation same as cork.
Area rugs of 97% recycled bottles.
Suppliers of bamboo and cork tile flooring were difficult to find in the first phase. Experienced installers were scarce as well. Now the materials are more available.
- **Countertops.** Pigmented, polished concrete; mixed, poured, and cured in the local shop. Ingredients—sand and other inert materials—considered to have minimal impact on the environment. Finished product similar in appearance to polished stone.
- **Cabinets.**
Kitchen: Constructed with sustainably forested maple, certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).
Living Room: Constructed from recycled pine chips pressed into a lightweight, durable material.
Bedrooms: Constructed with sustainably forested maple, certified by the FSC (other than wood veneer in closets).
Baths: Constructed with sustainably forested walnut, certified by the FSC.
Cabinets were sealed with environmentally sound products.
- **Kitchen Back Splash.** Recycled glass tiles, purchased from a local distributor.
- **Appliances.** The most energy- and water-efficient models on the market including dishwasher, refrigerator, oven, and a low-flow toilet. Slightly more expensive than standard appliances, offset by quick recovery of costs through energy savings.
- **Lighting.** Energy-efficient lighting throughout. Open plan maximizes interior daylight downstairs. Upstairs, glass doors and glass block window between bathrooms bring daylight to the interior.
- **Wing Wall.** Construction leftovers—chiefly FSC-certified wood and laminated metal—were used to construct a functional storage space near the entrance.

D is for Design

by L. Catherine Hader



For sale: Four-room basement level co-op unit in early 1900s building. No electrical service. Exposed ceiling pipes.

Most buyers would have run from this "fixer-upper."

Eric Lamar, however, saw "a marvelous opportunity to do something really cool." Working with KUBE architects Janet Bloomberg, AIA, and Richard Loosle-Ortega, Lamar cut, polished, and unearthed a gem.

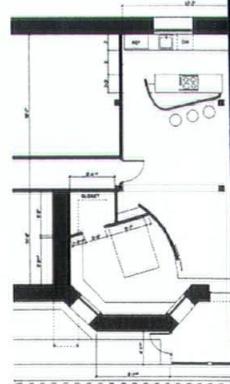
The Challenge: A Total Transformation

When Bloomberg and Loosle-Ortega first met with Lamar to discuss the project, he was living in another unit in the building—a "very traditional" apartment, they recall. Lamar was looking for a change, however, and was determined that his new home would be very urban and modern.

The architects went to work and brainstormed. Options A through D emerged, a range of choices with the edgiest, most contemporary being Option D. To the architects' delight, Lamar chose D. "We hardly ever get to do Option D!" exclaims Bloomberg.

To understand the boldness of Option D, one must first understand what the architects found in the basement unit. Two rooms flanked either side of a central hall (*see before plan*). In one of the four rooms, double doors led to a ground-level porch at the rear of the co-op building.

Then consider the desired outcome: the living space would double as an art gallery; the porch would become an extension of the living space as well as a private entry





Alan Karchner, Assoc. AIA.

for the owner; and the entire space would become as open and light-filled as possible.

All of this was to occur within a budget in the range of \$200,000.

Budgets of any size necessitate choices, and choices demand creativity. Where do the available dollars deliver the greatest impact?

As this project advanced, many of the choices would be made in the selection of materials and fixtures.

Option D: Three Curved Walls

Option D eliminated the existing interior walls. Through the addition of three curved walls, the architects carved spaces from the larger volume for a bedroom, bath, and kitchen. Stained mahogany panels slide on a curved metal track to reveal or hide the bedroom area. Across the room, a sweep of translucent plastic panels masks the bath area from the living space while admitting daylight. And in the kitchen, the curved bar/food preparation island is clad in metal mesh and capped with a zinc surface. Each of the materials was a deliberate choice to represent the activity within the space: wood represents warmth and comfort for sleeping; plastic represents water for bathing; and metal, heat for cooking.

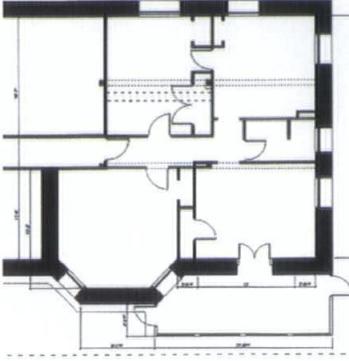
"We designed the curved elements to feel more like furniture than walls," says Bloomberg, and the curves do, in fact, appear as sculpture within an otherwise right-angled space.

Option D also perforated the two-foot-thick concrete wall between the living area and the porch with large openings. This stroke achieved two results: it extended the living area through the porch, and it increased daylight in the interior.

Finally, Option D created a welcoming exterior entry. (The unit has two entrances: one from the interior of the building, and the other from the parking lot through a small yard accessible only by the owner.) A handsome new gate of plank cedar and steel has replaced its chain link predecessor. Its slatted pattern echoes the jalousie windows of the enclosed porch on the floor above. Inside the gate, the former "welcome mat" of grass and brush is now a path of smooth white concrete and stones recalling a Japanese garden.

BEFORE

BEFORE



Materials, Fixtures, and Finishes

The architects built upon and complemented the in-place palette of brick walls, piping, stained concrete floors, and steel columns. They added a bamboo platform for the sleeping area and extended it as a step-down to the living area from the porch. A smooth black steel threshold marks the boundary between the porch and living area, separating the concrete flooring of the porch from the bamboo step-down.

Steel again appears in the kitchen, where it forms the backsplash for a slate countertop that runs nearly the full length of the wall. Lamar particularly liked the matte finish and dark grey of the Vermont slate and opted for this unique and more costly material over more readily available materials. In contrast, the shiny zinc on the bar was less expensive than other finishes he and his architects had considered.

Small details—such as exposed fasteners—are repeated throughout. Outdoors, they connect cedar to steel on the gate. Inside on the curved surfaces, they connect wood to its unseen frame, plastic to its visible wood framing, and metal mesh to steel structure.

Aesthetics and budget together drove the selection of materials, fixtures, and finishes. A substantial investment in lighting for the art collection meant compromise elsewhere. The plastic that shields the bath area from view, for example, originally was planned as glass. When cost became a consideration, Bloomberg brought to bear the experience of previous commercial designs and substituted a less expensive plastic. "I knew it would look good because we had used it in galleries," she says.

"We mix commercial and residential materials," agrees Loosle-Ortega, noting their commercial design backgrounds. As an example, "In the porch we used aluminum storefront, a system more often found in commercial design, to make it as open as possible. We found a very thin system from Canada; the aluminum framework practically disappears and all you see is the glass."

The Realities of Renovations

Renovations can be unpredictable, particularly in older buildings where what you see is not always what you get. Such was the case of



BEFORE

this basement co-op, requiring the architects to confront the known and the unknown.

The known included exposed pipes. In the living area the pipes penetrated the space above the door, and they hung low from the ceiling. In the porch, one large pipe bisected the exterior wall. The seemingly obvious solution—cover them—was not an option, as these pipes serve the entire building and had to remain exposed for maintenance.

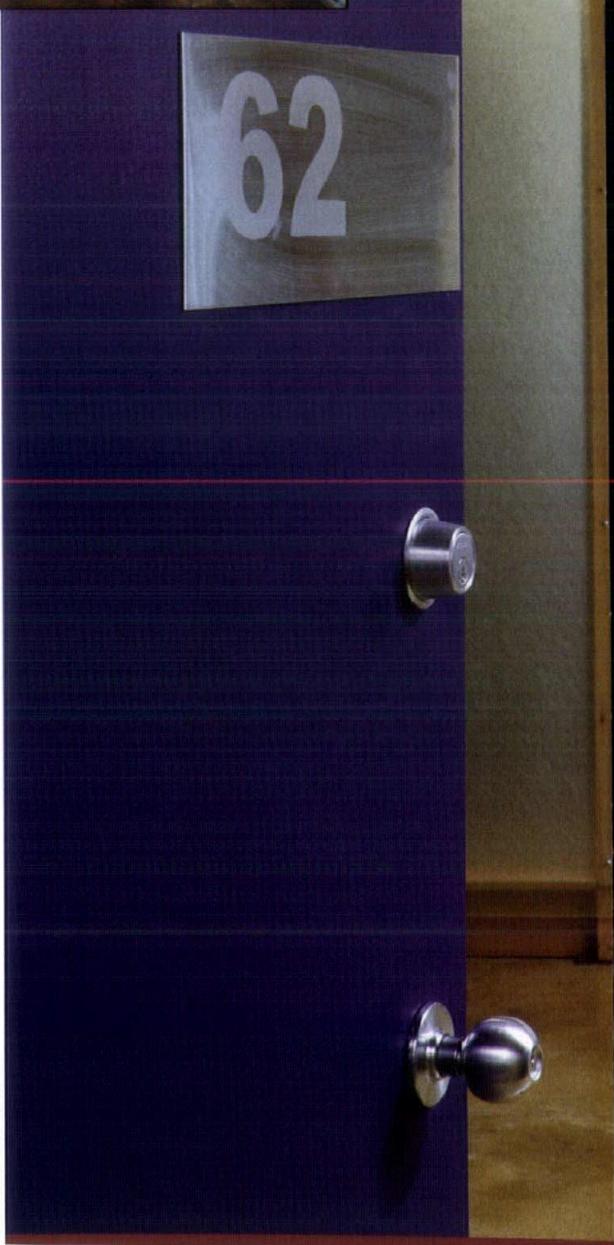
The solution lay in the architects' creative use of materials. Throughout the project, they had combined traditional residential materials—drywall, paint, wood—with commercial or industrial materials—concrete, metal, plastic—to achieve the contemporary urban effect their client sought. In keeping with this approach, they used the industrial appearance of the pipes as a design element within the residential format. In the living space, the pipes were replaced with thinner copper piping to improve their appearance and were raised to make them less prominent. In the porch, industrial materials turned the eyesore into an asset, camouflaging the pipe with a custom-designed perforated metal and steel surround and light.

The absence of electrical service was another known to be tackled. Beneath the original ceiling, the architects created an area to allow its insertion, in effect lowering the ceiling. This produced a secondary and welcomed effect of further minimizing the intrusion of the exposed pipes.

The unknown surfaced when the concrete wall was found to support all the floors above it. The original plan had been to remove this wall entirely to join the porch with the living area. Instead, two sections were removed, one on each side of the existing doorway. This opened the area to the maximum extent possible while maintaining the necessary structural support.

The unknown included discoveries that enhanced the design as well. The architects found two round steel columns inside square drywall enclosures, adding to the stock of industrial accents. With a coat of black paint, the first stands in the center of the large open space, and the other anchors one end of the metal kitchen bar.

Drywall also had hidden brick walls and niches. To the extent their condition allowed, these too were incorporated in the design, and the niches were selectively replicated to strengthen their contribution to the design. For example, a trio of copper ceiling pipes terminates in its own niche in the wall adjoining the door.



Alan Karchmer, Assoc. AIA.

Lamar Residence
Architect: KUBE Architecture PC
Contractor: Primos Contractors

Getting it Done

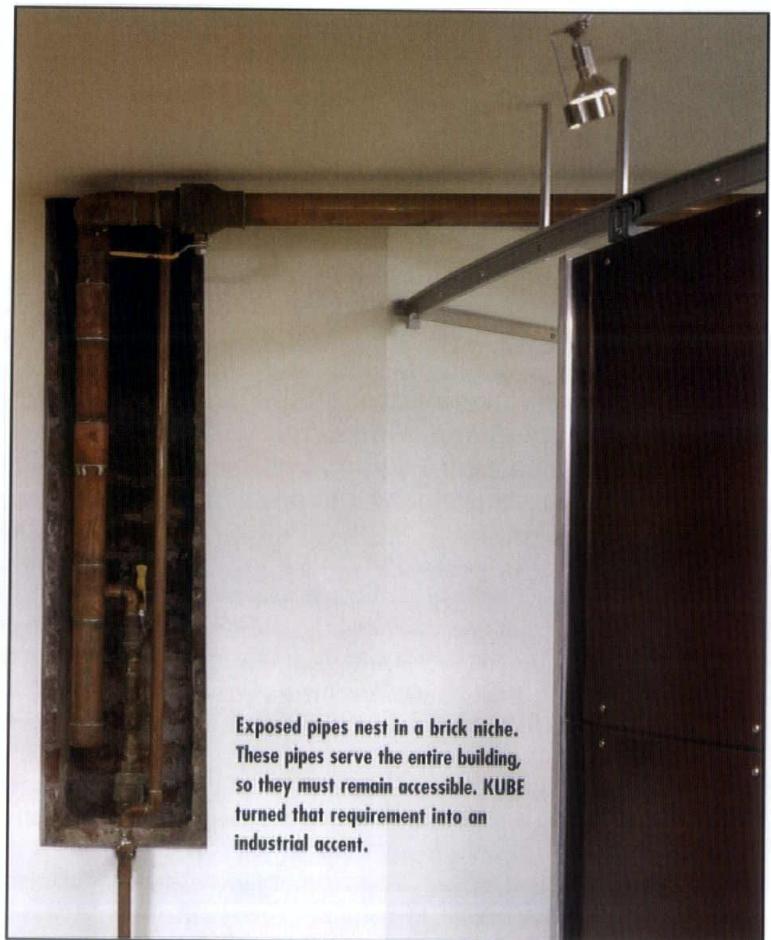
The design process, two to three months, was highly collaborative and, according to Bloomberg, "really fun. Eric was very open."

"The design is the fun part," agrees Lamar. He emphasizes that owners need to choose architects carefully; they need to be sure they can communicate with their architect because "things can get stressful in the implementation." He is very clear that he made the right decision to retain KUBE to manage the project through construction. In this instance, construction stretched from a planned three months to five as the general contractor worked to get certain of the specialized details right.

Lamar handled the demolition portion of the construction himself. A former firefighter, Lamar "got in there with a sledgehammer," and when it was all over, 13 tons of debris were hauled away, clearing the way for the general contractor to begin work.

This was Lamar's first experience working with an architect. He began his search for an architect on the AIA/DC website, www.aiadc.com, by reviewing portfolios online. He identified five firms whose work mostly closely resembled what he had in mind for his space and then interviewed them by telephone. Four were subsequently invited for a site visit. He selected KUBE Architecture PC because, he says, "It was pretty clear they 'got' what I wanted."

The result: Lamar got what he wanted. 



Alan Karchmer, Assoc. AIA.

New Condo Redo

When Brand New Isn't Good Enough

by Denise Liebowitz

Last September, Brad McDougle spent the night on the sidewalk in front of a condo sales office along with 40 other prospective buyers, all vying for units in a building that wasn't even out of the ground yet. When the office finally opened in the morning, the developer released units to only the first 15 people in line, and McDougle was lucky number three. His new condo will be ready this fall, but before he moves in he plans to gut the interior and start over.

In the Washington area's red-hot condo market, McDougle is not alone. Buyers are snapping up units because they love the convenient location, the neighborhood, and the value condos offer in an overheated housing market. And if the design of their new space is not to their liking, well, they'll just change it. For McDougle, his place in the highly desirable Clarendon neighborhood of Arlington couldn't be better located. But when he saw the limited range of custom options and finishes the builder was offering, he knew he would have to get an architect and make substantial changes. "I'd spent several years out of the country, and when I came back I was struck by how 'Colonial' the Washington area is. New development here is cookie-cutter traditional to please a mass market, and I wanted something more contemporary."

He turned to Andreas Charalambous, AIA, of FORMA Design, a Washington firm specializing in interior architecture and known for its spare, sophisticated design sensibility. McDougle and Charalambous are already working on plans for a makeover of the brand new space. McDougle has ordered bottom-of-the-line finishes from the developer because he knows he will be pulling out much of the interior as soon as he takes possession. Lenders usually insist that the property be fully built out before going to settlement, so leaving the unit unfinished was not an option. "Although I wasn't happy with the finish choices," says McDougle, "with 40 people in line behind me, the builder didn't have to be very accommodating."

McDougle figures his purchase has already appreciated in just the past few months alone and that the added cost of an architect is well worth it. "It will take me a little longer to move in, but it will be what I want. Why buy a place and be forced to live with something that doesn't make you happy?"

"Everyone thought I was nuts!" laughs Bart Harris, talking about friends' reaction to his overhaul of a just-completed condo near Ballston Common in Arlington. Harris is another homeowner whose new space has been burnished to lean perfection by FORMA Design. The airy two-bedroom unit with a spacious terrace and convenient location had

everything he wanted except sleek design. "I knew from the get-go that I wanted something different for the interior. It was such a shame to rip all that stuff out and throw it away. I begged the builder to leave the unit unfinished so we wouldn't have to waste it all, but except for a few items, he insisted on completing it."

Out went the traditional oak flooring, Federal-style mantel, and stock bathroom fixtures. In came earth-friendly bamboo floors, a dramatic concrete fireplace surround that integrates a flat-screen TV as a sophisticated piece of art, and sybaritic bathrooms that are anything but standard. A small den was transformed into a custom dressing room, a kitchen counter was lowered to create a breakfast bar, and the master bath tub was tossed to make way for a large custom shower.

"This was a soup-to-nuts job," says Charalambous. "We custom-designed the living and dining room furniture, chose the floor-to-ceiling linen curtains, and are even working with the client on finding the right accessories. This is a small space, so it's important to give it a sense of continuity. Other building residents come in here and can't believe they own an identical unit. It's a custom home."

The home owner is convinced his investment has paid off. "I couldn't have been more pleased with the attention Andreas paid to detail—he kept me from making silly mistakes."

Another FORMA client was not so lucky. That buyer was planning some major changes in his new condo and asked Charalambous to join him on the final walkthrough. "But," says the architect, "when I saw the unit with its difficult layout, poor natural light, and awkward placement of utility stacks, I told him that he would never be able to get the kind of space he was dreaming of. The client had to go forward with the purchase, but he plans to flip it and look for something better." This story offers another reason why prospective condo buyers might want to consult an architect before closing the deal.

So do condo buyers who are looking for something beyond bland have no choice but to rip up their spanking new spaces to get what they want? Not if builders invest in interior design upfront, says Ernie Marcus, a Principal in Triangle Ventures, a Washington development firm. "We don't do 'tract' condos. Our goal is to build to a high standard of design and materials and help prospective buyers understand what they are getting before they make the purchase." To achieve this level of quality and transparency, Marcus has turned to FORMA Design on several recent projects.





REDO

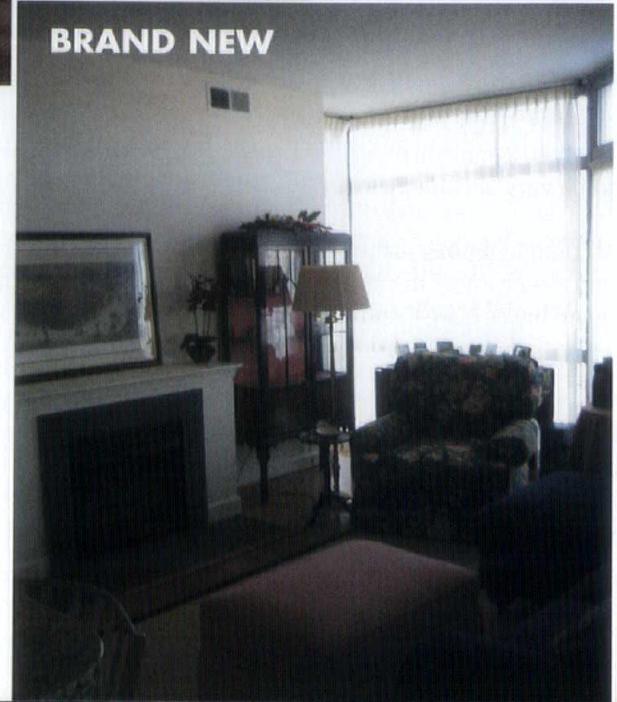
Compare FORMA's redesign of the Harris condo (at left) with a neighboring unit (below). Bamboo floors and a concrete fireplace surround replace the oak flooring and Federal-style mantel that came with the apartments.

Marcus and Charalambous are currently working on two luxury Triangle Venture condo projects near Meridian Hill Park. The developer wants FORMA's hip, clean design for his two buildings—the 30-unit Barcelona and 33-unit Verona Parc—as well as the presentation materials that will help buyers visualize what they are getting. In collaboration with the base building architect, Eric Colbert & Associates, the FORMA team has designed the lobbies, public areas, and unit interiors, and selected colors and finish materials.

"I was really excited about the exterior building design of the Verona Parc and Barcelona projects, but it wasn't until Andreas got involved that I could really engage with the interior work," says Marcus. "The exterior of The Barcelona is playful and I was thinking Gaudi and ceramic tile. Andreas came up with interior finishes that precisely capture the lively southern European spirit of the building."

"With FORMA's renderings, computer-generated perspectives, and boards of materials and finishes, it's hard for a buyer not to understand what he is getting,"

BRAND NEW





says the developer. "For example, some of the terraces on these units are very large—up to 700 square feet. Buyers would have a hard time visualizing how to use and furnish all this space without Andreas' perspectives."

Triangle Venture projects typically do not offer a wide range of buyer options. "We don't want to do vanilla then add on a lot of design alternatives. We'd rather invest in good design upfront, and from what we can see, our buyers are happy with it."

Mark Stahl, VP for Sales and Marketing for PN Hoffman, agrees. "Sometimes buyers get overwhelmed and frankly don't have time to make all these choices. They like what our interior architects have designed and just go with it." An upscale Washington developer with more than 22 projects to its credit, PN Hoffman has offered a limited number of "designer-ready" units in its condo projects. "These are what we call 'warm lit shells,'" explains Stahl. "We put in the basic services—the electrical feeds, plumbing, waste stacks, and central HVAC—but not the interior partitions, the kitchen and bath fittings, floors, and so on. The buyer and his architect have a free hand with the design and layout of the unit."





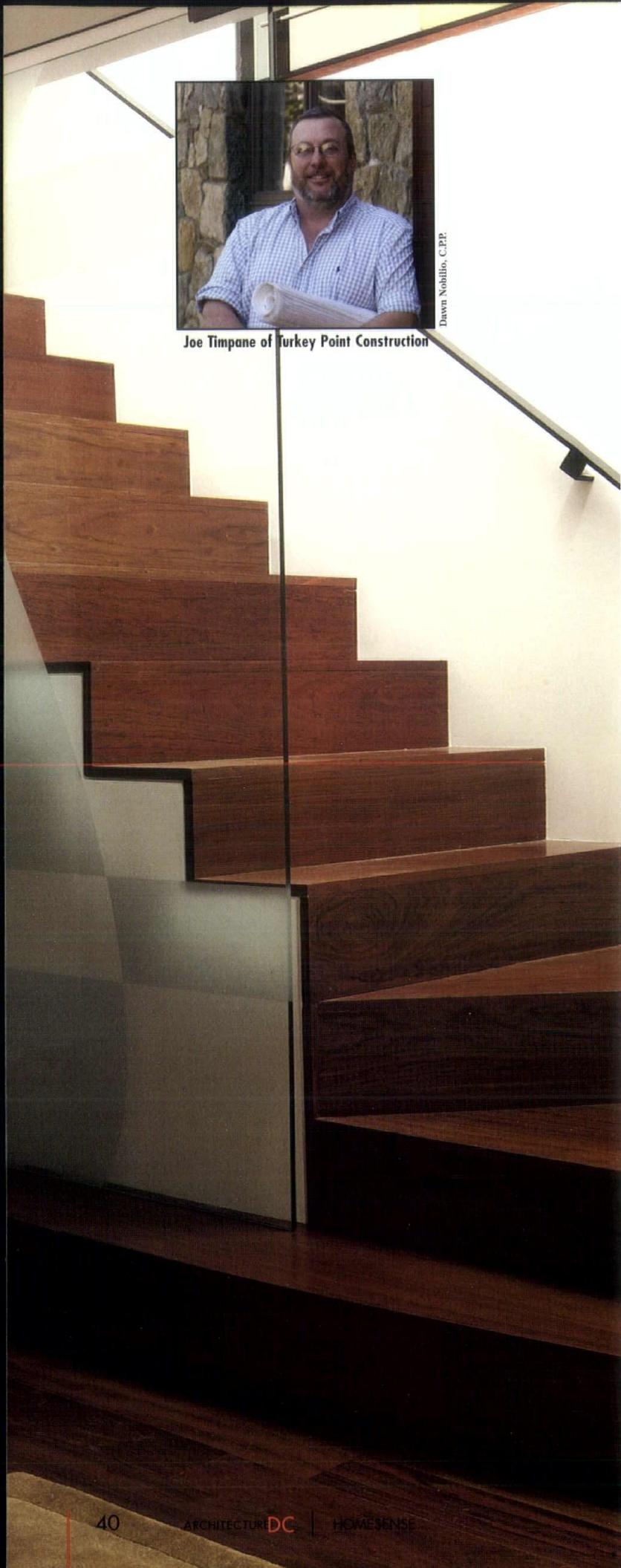
Geoffrey Hodgson

Stahl points out, however, that from the builder's perspective, offering designer-ready units is a challenge. "Taking one of these units off our assembly line demands a huge amount of our time and attention, and because of that there is not a substantial cost reduction for the buyer. Also," he says, "if all the rest of the condos in the building are completed and occupied, the new residents are not happy about the continuing noise, dirt, and disruption for the one unfinished unit." Generally, the designer-ready approach works only when the buyer is paying cash and doesn't have a lender concerned about closing on an unfinished property. Stahl reports that because of the financial and logistical difficulties in offering unfinished shells, his company has delivered only four such units out of a total of more than 700.

While most buyers will not be tempted to take a sledgehammer to their new digs in pursuit of a design dream, a few intrepid souls are doing just that in the firm belief that the best homes are made, not bought. ☐

Harris Residence
Architect: **FORMA Design**
Contractor: **MCA Remodeling, Inc.**





HOMESENSE

Talking Numbers

with Your Future Contractor

by Hannah McCann

You've got architect's plans. You've got money in the bank. Now it's time to hire a contractor who will build your dream home.

The first hurdle in this frenzied building market is to find a contractor who will actually call you back. Better yet: find three. You want three contractors to bid on your project so you can compare costs and know that you're going to get the most value for your dollar.

A crucial step in the creation of a new home or addition, the bidding process is about more than how much you'll spend. Now we get into the brass tacks: how, exactly, will this thing be built? Paying careful attention at this stage of the project pays off in the end.

Get Real

What do you want to see in the contractor's bid? If your answer is "a low price," you (and most every other homeowner) are fooled. The right answer is "an honest price." The magic number at the bottom of the contractor's bid is worthless unless it's a real number based on the contractor's careful evaluation of how much it will cost to build your project.

The key to getting a real number is to start the bidding process with a complete set of plans from your architect. "Make sure that everything is on the drawings—no more, no less," says Joe Timpane of Turkey Point Construction, a local company that specializes in custom residential work by local architects including Robert M. Gurney, FAIA. "What type of toilet? What kind of sink fixture? Make sure it's all listed. Don't leave anything up to the contractor. Know what you're buying."

If every piece of the project is specified in the architect's drawings—or "spec'd," as they say in the business—then the contractor will be able to put together an itemized bid. The cost should be broken down into 30–40 line items that detail the price of everything from the permit fees to the doorknobs.

If your bid comes back without line items and only a lump price for the project, beware. You don't want what Joe Bohm, the president of Horizon Builders, calls "the forehead bid." He explains, "I can't put a set of drawings to my head and say, 'OK, this is going to cost \$300,000.'"

Also be wary of bids that simply price your job by the square foot. "If that's how somebody's bidding, they're not paying attention to what you want," says Turkey Point's Timpane. "There's no such thing as price by square foot on a custom house," stresses Bohm, whose company builds projects by local architects such as Versaci Neumann & Partners Architects, Barnes Vanze Architects, and Muñoz Architects. "No two houses we've ever done have been the same."

Stairs in the Pucciariello House designed by Robert M. Gurney, FAIA, and built by Turkey Point Construction.

Choosing the One

With itemized bids, you can compare competing contractors fairly. Sit down with your architect and go through each bid, line by line. The lowest bidder may have omitted the cost of demolition or substituted vinyl for wood siding. "Confirm that you're getting what you think you've bought," says Timpane.

Once you understand how the bids compare, it's time to choose your builder. "The old rule is, 'Throw away your high guy; throw away your low guy; start negotiating with your middle guy,'" says Timpane, explaining that the "low guy" might have not have the requisite experience to accurately bid—or build—your job.

But in this busy market, the rules have changed a bit. Timpane urges homeowners, "Don't be afraid to take the high guy. Go more on who you like and whose body of work you like. Go put your eyeballs on their finished work. Look at the quality. Is everything clean and neat? Is the client happy? Did he finish when he said he would finish?"

Other Tough Choices

If the bid is for more than you can afford, what can you do to save money?

According to contractors, the best way to shave costs, unfortunately, is to scale down on the quality of plumbing fixtures, countertops, and windows. "Understand that 60-70% of the costs [of a project] are driven by your aesthetic decisions," says Bohm. Substituting less expensive materials will help save money.

The number-one mistake that homeowners make is thinking they can cut back on the costs of a builder's mark-up by buying materials themselves. Whether you're talking about tile, light fixtures, or appliances, there's a lot that can go wrong. "Buying materials yourself opens you up to problems you may not anticipate," Bohm warns. Are you buying enough tile? The right fixture? Did you get all the parts needed to hook up the dishwasher? Is it being delivered at the right time in the building process? If it's not exactly right, you'll be paying a sub-contractor's hourly rate—perhaps more than \$100 an hour—to fix it. Plus, you'll be slowing down the job and upsetting the delicate balance of the subs' schedule.

Be aware that costs may escalate during a project due to unforeseen circumstances: builders open a wall and find asbestos that has to be removed; they dig into the ground and find an underground spring. Unforeseen expenses are more likely to occur in additions to existing homes. There's no way to plan for them, but Timpane suggests setting aside an extra three to five percent just in case.

But also be aware that the main reason costs escalate during construction is that homeowners decide to upgrade from the materials that were originally spec'd. Once you see the \$300-per-square-foot granite, you'll want it instead of the \$100-per-square-foot granite, predicts Bohm, based on his experience with clients. Building a home is "a very personal thing," he points out, and desire often outweighs the cost of a change-order. "In their business life, people would never run a project the way they do their own home."

Do construction projects ever cost exactly what the contractor said it would in the bid? "Very often," says Timpane. "Mine come in right on the money. When I bid a job, that's usually what I get. As long as you sign an AIA contract and everything is spec'd, that's all it will cost." ☀

Porch of a Private Residence designed by Versaci Neumann & Partners Architects and built by Horizon Builders.



Joe Bohm of Horizon Builders



Sign an AIA Contract

Use a written contract to seal your deal with the contractor you choose. AIA offers standard forms of agreement that have been carefully reviewed and court-tested. Widely used by and accepted in the construction industry, they present a current consensus among organizations representing owners, lawyers, contractors, engineers, and architects. AIA documents are available at the AIA Bookstore at the AIA's national headquarters, 1735 New York Avenue, NW, or by calling 800.365.ARCH(2724). For more information, visit AIA National's website at www.aia.org.

Where is Your House From?

by Mark Kalin, FAIA, FCSI, and Paul Stevenson Oles, FAIA

Where does your house come from? The global economy isn't just automobiles and electronic equipment. The products in our homes also come from all over the world.

What does this drawing tell us? That our homes are a blend of a world effort to manufacture and sell products. And that we have choices. When it comes time to choose the products that your home will be built with, ask your architect about aesthetics, cost, and performance—and source. The decisions we make shape the global economy.

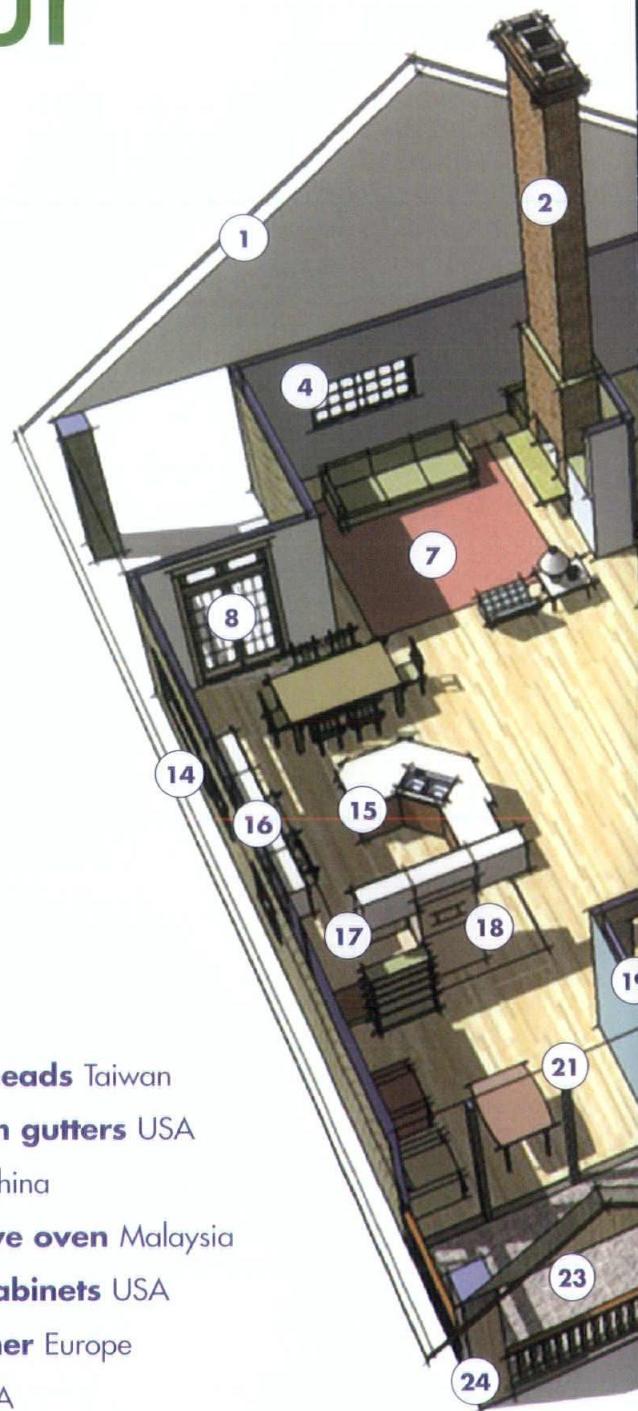
Mark Kalin, FAIA, FCSI, is a principal of Kalin Associates, specifications consultants in Newton, Massachusetts.

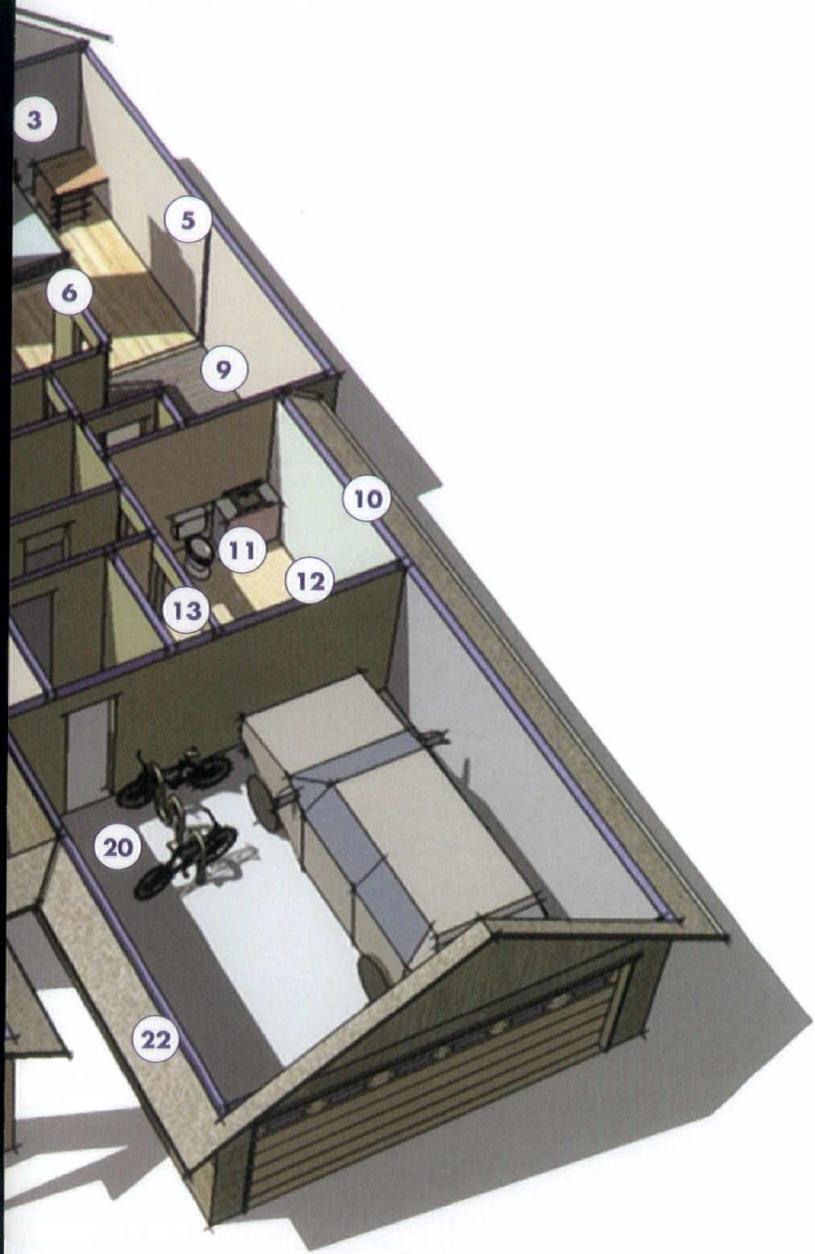
Paul Stevenson Oles, FAIA, is an architect and perspectivist in Newton, Massachusetts. The recipient of a Loeb Fellowship, he received an AIA Institute Honor for distinguished achievement in the field of architectural delineation. He currently conducts workshops in hybrid imaging and SketchUp software, which was used to produce this image.

Reprinted from *ArchitectureBoston*, March-April 2005.

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Answers @ Home

Q: Letting the Outdoors In?

A: Homes That Embrace the Garden

by Tabitha Kenlon

Pachter Residence
Architect: Reena Racki Associates
Contractor: Madden Corporation

Even the most ardent nature lover acknowledges the usefulness of doors, ceilings, and walls. But these protective elements, while offering shelter from wind, rain, snow, and sun, can also become barriers that separate homeowners from one of their most prized possessions: their backyard. Two local architects have faced the paradoxical challenge of letting the outside in with beautiful results. Reena Racki Associates transformed a kitchen in Cleveland Park; Inscape Studio built a porch in Bethesda; in both cases, the division between inside and out became less important, less noticeable, and infinitely less distracting.

The Garden Room

The first work Marc Pachter did on his house was not actually on the house, but in the garden. He had it meticulously redesigned by landscaper Jane MacLeish in a slightly Japanese mode, with a small fountain and beautiful vegetation. When he turned his attention back to the house, he focused on the kitchen. He knew what he hated about the room: it was small and dark, and unimproved by a boxy brick addition the previous owners had constructed. But he didn't fully realize what he loved most about his property until architect Reena Racki, AIA, asked him. When he replied, "the garden," the metamorphosis of that claustrophobic kitchen began.

Due to zoning restrictions, a further addition to the house was impossible. So the "brick box" at the end of the kitchen was razed completely and a new breakfast nook, with the same dimensions, created in its place. Now, windows form two walls, and high transom windows crown a third, letting in sunshine but keeping out a view of the neighbor's brick wall.

Racki designed every detail of the new kitchen to heighten the feeling of spaciousness and provide optimum functionality. A high ceiling with an exposed structure is adorned with a curved wooden beam, where light fixtures shaped like tiny stars twinkle down subtly. Complementing the warmth evinced by the abundance of natural light, maple was used for all the cabinetry; the only other tones inside are the stainless steel appliances, the white porcelain tile floor, and the absolute black countertops. "Too much color inside," explains Racki, "would make you miss the green outside."

The placement of all the utilities, counters, and storage spaces was carefully designed to be discreet yet accessible. There is no countertop clutter to interrupt the view out into the garden. The usual kitchen accessories are tucked away in closets and cabinets, available when needed and hidden when not. Open one door for the broom closet, another for the trash can, still one more for the butler's pantry. Even the stove's exhaust hood is concealed.

Special care was taken throughout the rebuilding of the addition to protect the garden. Holes for new piers were drilled carefully, ensuring the survival of a beautiful evergreen just outside. And the view looking in is just as gently blended, with the granite paving in the garden reflected in the purple-gray paint of the reconstructed structure.

The renovated kitchen cannot be assigned a specific style. Both Pachter and Racki hesitate to place a label on the room. Pachter appreciates the quiet simplicity of the Arts and Crafts movement, but believes "every era in which something is done should feel like its era." His house is a colonial, but as he has methodically devoted his attention to each room, every one has emerged with a style of its own. Pachter compares walking through his home to moving through a museum, in which the rooms have distinct moods but blend together in a seamless whole.

For Racki, connection to nature is fundamental. She notes this is especially important in urban settings, where city-dwellers can go for days or even weeks without seeing the moon or grass that goes on for more than two square feet. In the midst of never-ending asphalt, Racki strives to provide small respites, tiny nature reserves, little escapes—all within reach, right in the backyard.

The Butterfly Porch

Elisa Rapaport had a childhood memory that she longed to reenact for her own family: summertime meals taken outside, serenaded by crickets and caressed by warm breezes. So after she and husband Michael Schoenbaum purchased a house in Bethesda, they decided to make her vision a reality. Shopping for a house had cultivated Rapaport's strong interest in architecture, and she tackled the project eagerly. She devoured shelter books and magazines—one of her favorites is *Dwell*—and found herself drawn to a more contemporary and modern style, one that might provide a unique contrast to her traditional colonial home.

Rapaport began her search for an architect on the AIA/DC website, www.aiadc.com. After looking at numerous work samples online, she interviewed a few different firms and chose Inscape Studio. She was impressed with their design work and their eco-friendly approach, which was of paramount importance to her. When she met with Rick Harlan Schneider, AIA, LEED AP, and Petros N. Zouzoulas, LEED AP, of Inscape, she explained her basic requirements. She wanted a porch off of the kitchen, enabling easy transit between where the food was prepared and where it would be served. The porch should be screened to keep out bugs, but still have an open, inviting feel that embraced the out-of-doors. It should have plenty of space for a table and chairs as well as convenient and inconspicuous storage space for utensils and linens to limit trips back to the kitchen. An unscreened deck portion would be nice, too. And it should all be done in the most environmentally friendly way possible.

After discussing the future structure, Schneider and Zouzoulas took stock of the present conditions. They documented the angle of the house, the views to and from neighboring yards, and the location of the driveway. They also noted the track of the sun, the surrounding flora and fauna, and the direction of the breezes. Then they went back to the studio to research.

Architects often look to similar work done by their colleagues for education and inspiration. Zouzoulas notes that the initial photos he studied, however, were of fields of flowers rather than decks, and of tobacco barns rather than porches. "My concern was for the landscape more than the house at first," he explains. Rapaport and Schoenbaum wanted a little backyard retreat, and the Inscape team was determined to create something that would not spoil the environment they wanted to enjoy.



Since Rapaport did not want a structure in a style that might logically be added to a colonial house, the designers let their imaginations run free. Their final scheme was of a reasonably modest room with a dramatic butterfly-roof canopy. The structure is separated from the house by a deck, providing a transitional open space and allowing sunlight into the kitchen, which would not have been possible had the porch been built flush to the house.

Once the design had been finalized, construction began. Proving the evolutionary nature of architecture, changes had to be made when digging started and a tree root was discovered. Rather than sacrifice the tree, the Inscape team made alterations to the design and work continued around the tree. Schneider calls the porch "environmentally responsive and responsible."

The entire project did indeed strive to celebrate nature and avoid injuring it. Inscape used cedar that is sustainably harvested, a

process that avoids clear cutting and the destruction of forests, and ACQ pressure-treated lumber, which uses a copper-based preservation technique that won't injure humans, animals, plants, or the soil.

Soon there will be even more natural beauty to appreciate: Rapaport has plans for a lush garden, watered by rain captured by the butterfly roof and channeled via a hanging chain into barrels.

The roof is the true crowning glory, visible blocks away from the Rapaport-Schoenbaum home. Zouzoulas describes it as "dynamic. It looks like it's taking flight. Each side of it responds to what it's facing." In fact, the roof had to do a little flying to get to its current position. After it was delivered, the construction crew realized they had no way of putting it in place, so it sat in the driveway until a crane could be found. Then it was lifted up and over the house and lowered gently onto the porch.



Dan Redmond

The Butterfly Porch
Architect: Inscape Studio
Contractor: DMI Development Group LLC

Every detail is meant to enhance both the functionality and the beauty of the structure and its surroundings. The light fixtures reflect off of the roof canopy and back down on the interior to give a warm glow. Zouzoulas describes the construction as akin more to the creation of a piece of furniture than a building, with screws hidden in the same way they would be on a chair or bookshelf. Exposed beams lend a rustic yet industrial aura, and the warm orange cedar contrasts nicely with the blue of the house. Carefully positioned slats provide shade and privacy while allowing breezes to come through.

And what do the neighbors think of this unusual addition? Rapaport laughs when asked. "They're not always sure what it is at first. I've been asked if it's a spa. But no one has said they don't like it." The architects aren't surprised—good design is at home everywhere: inside, outside, and in-between.

Trees: Build Around or Cut It Down?

Both Marc Pachter and Elisa Rapaport confronted the same dilemma. In opening their homes to embrace their gardens, they found the roots of a beloved tree in the way. Faced with the decision to cut down the tree and proceed as planned or alter the design of their project, both sided in favor of the tree.

We asked the contractors who built these projects—Mike Madden of Madden Corporation and Deborah Magano of DMI Development Group LLC—what's involved in building around a tree. "Building around a tree is certainly a tricky prospect," says Magano, who has owned and operated her design-build firm for the past 18 years. Both she and Madden consult with experts before proceeding.

"Depending on the type of tree, some can withstand a cut [to the roots], and some are very delicate and you'll just kill them. We usually get an arborist in there that helps us out," says Madden, whose company has 24 years of experience in high-end residential remodeling.

"I called out our staff landscape architect, Cara Fortunato, to give another opinion," says Magano, recalling her experience building Rapaport's porch. "Her advice was to dig pilot holes as close as possible to the original proposed footings to see how far we could go until hitting 'feeder' roots. The first hole we dug hit a large root right off the surface, so we just kept digging around that site until we could position the footings deep enough. Based on the [results of the] digging, the architects modified the plan without changing too much of the original drawing, and we made it work."

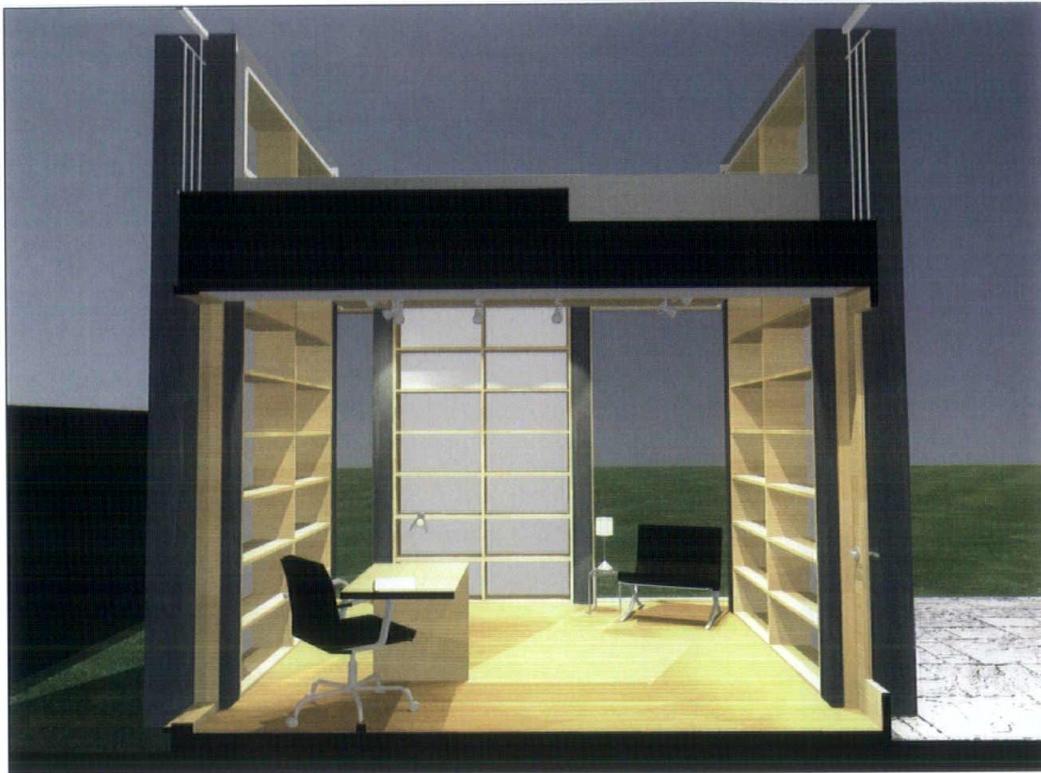
Madden describes a similar process of navigating the tree roots during construction of Pachter's addition. "We took into consideration where we could put footers and tried to work backwards to what the architect wanted," he recalls. An engineer evaluated how much of the addition could be cantilevered beyond the supports.

If you are going to build around a tree, nurture it during the construction. Madden recommends drilling holes around the site to let air and water reach the roots, because the ground will get especially compacted as workers traffic the site.

Magano cautions, "There still is no guarantee that if you spend countless hours hand-digging the footings or hand-prepping the site, the tree won't ultimately die from the shock of disturbing the soil around the roots."

In the end, is building around a tree worth it? Cost-wise, the answer is no, both contractors agree; it's cheaper to cut it down. But the decision should be based on "the emotional value someone puts on a tree," Madden says. "If it's a tree that's been around for a long time, it's going to take a long time to come back."

—Hannah McCann



Q: Want a Light-Filled Library?

A: Balance Bookshelves with Windows.

by Tabitha Kenlon

This library addition is not going to be a forbidding gothic den with dark wood, velvet draperies, and leather-bound tomes. While the walls of the library will indeed be lined with books, the owner wants a plentitude of natural light, inviting and warm.

"We thought of this little library as a garden defined by walls of books, a sort of Stonehenge made of bookshelves, with light coming into the room in mysterious ways," explains Mark McInturff, FAIA, of McInturff Architects.

Three large bookcases will form the main walls, and sweeping floor-to-ceiling windows will complete the enclosure, allowing an abundance of light and outdoor views. The ceiling, floors, and window frames will be paneled with a light, warm wood. The resulting room will be clean and spacious, with a casually comfortable air.

McInturff describes one of the most striking features of the library: "The roof will be flat, forming a terrace for the creation of a small sculpture garden to display the owners' growing collection. The bookcases will extend above the roof to form a railing for the terrace, and clerestory windows in their faces will scoop light into the library below."

When completed, the addition will stand as an elegant interpretation of a library, one that is awash in natural light and affords the reader a commanding and inspiring view—not only of the walls filled with books, but also of the world beyond them.

McInturff Architects

Contractor: Lofgren Construction



Q: TV in an Open Family Room?

A: Object in the Round

More and more homeowners are requesting open-plan family rooms as informal spaces for living, eating, and cooking. Walls are removed to create one large area with different zones of activity. This concept makes for relaxed living, but it tends to challenge homeowners with the question of how to accommodate practical necessities such as storage, furniture, and electronic equipment. Without walls and corners, it's hard to know where to put things.

One solution is to let the needs of daily living become objects-in-the-round within an open space, rather than imbedded in a sidewall as a general backdrop to a room. In our renovation of a turn-of-the-century home in Chicago, the TV is incorporated into a simple, partial-height divider between the breakfast/kitchen and the family room. This design element provides a shared place to house the TV on one side and miscellaneous

breakfast supplies on the other. It also develops a sense of flow between the two areas.

Generally, accommodating the family television, if not in a room solely dedicated to it such as a home theater, becomes problematic in a room where other functions such as reading, meeting, hearth-gathering, and talking are preferred. It can dominate the space. The in-the-round idea takes the TV, gives it a handsome enclosure, and locates it axially in the room.

Another benefit of this design strategy is that the TV viewers are looking toward the center of the overall space with peripheral views of others, rather than at a wall in the opposite direction. It could be argued that this circumstance is a subtle reinforcement of the family nucleus.

Jane Treacy
Treacy & Eagleburger Architects
Contractor: Basil Crittenden

Alan Karchmer, Assoc. AIA





Q: Small Bathroom?

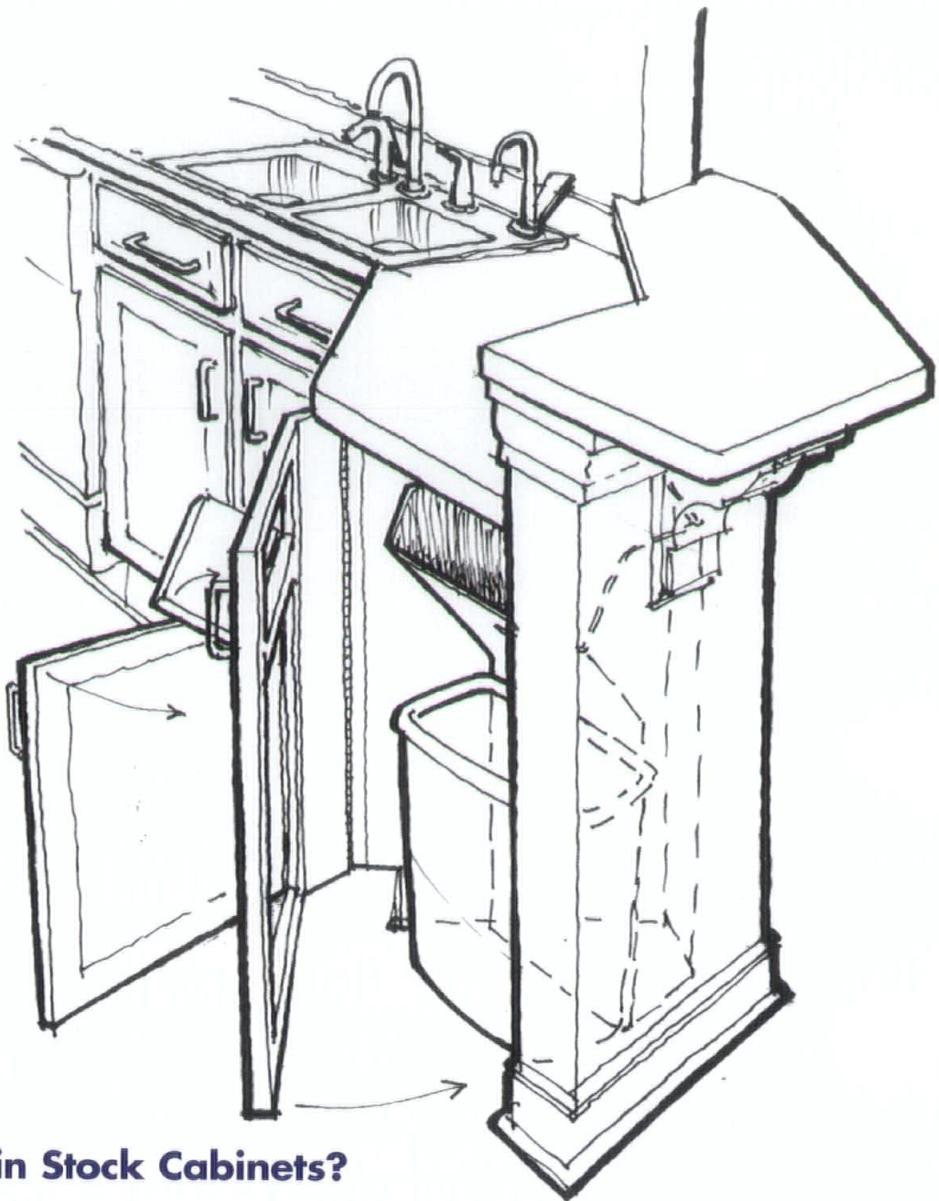
A: Glass Connections

Glass can create continuity in a variety of ways. In this small bath with the requisite shower, we extended the sand-blasted glass countertop (with a sink mounted on top of and through the countertop) through the clear glass shower enclosure to form a shelf for toiletries and to visually tie the two spaces together as one. A horizontal swath of glass tile continues across from above the countertop and through the shower, further reinforcing the continuity. The slightly opaque sand-blasted countertop and similarly colored glass tile become the dominant focal point and help make the clear glass shower enclosure disappear.

Norman Smith, AIA

Norman Smith Architecture

Contractor: Acadia Contractors



Q: Wasted Space in Stock Cabinets?

A: Recycling/Waste Compartment

In kitchens fitted with stock cabinetry, there is often wasted space. These empty nooks between cabinets and end walls are usually camouflaged by a matching wood filler strip or false cabinet fronts.

I turned an ugly leftover space under the counter into a built-in waste compartment disguised as a base cabinet. I ordered a cabinet front and a wide filler piece matching my cabinets from my builder's millwork wholesaler. I mitered the filler and the cabinet front and glued them together to create a corner piece which aligns with the existing cabinets. The drawer front was removed and fitted with hinges and a pull so it swings down to open. With a piano hinge, I attached the assemblage to the side of the existing base cabinet, and I installed a stop on the other side of the opening to latch it shut.

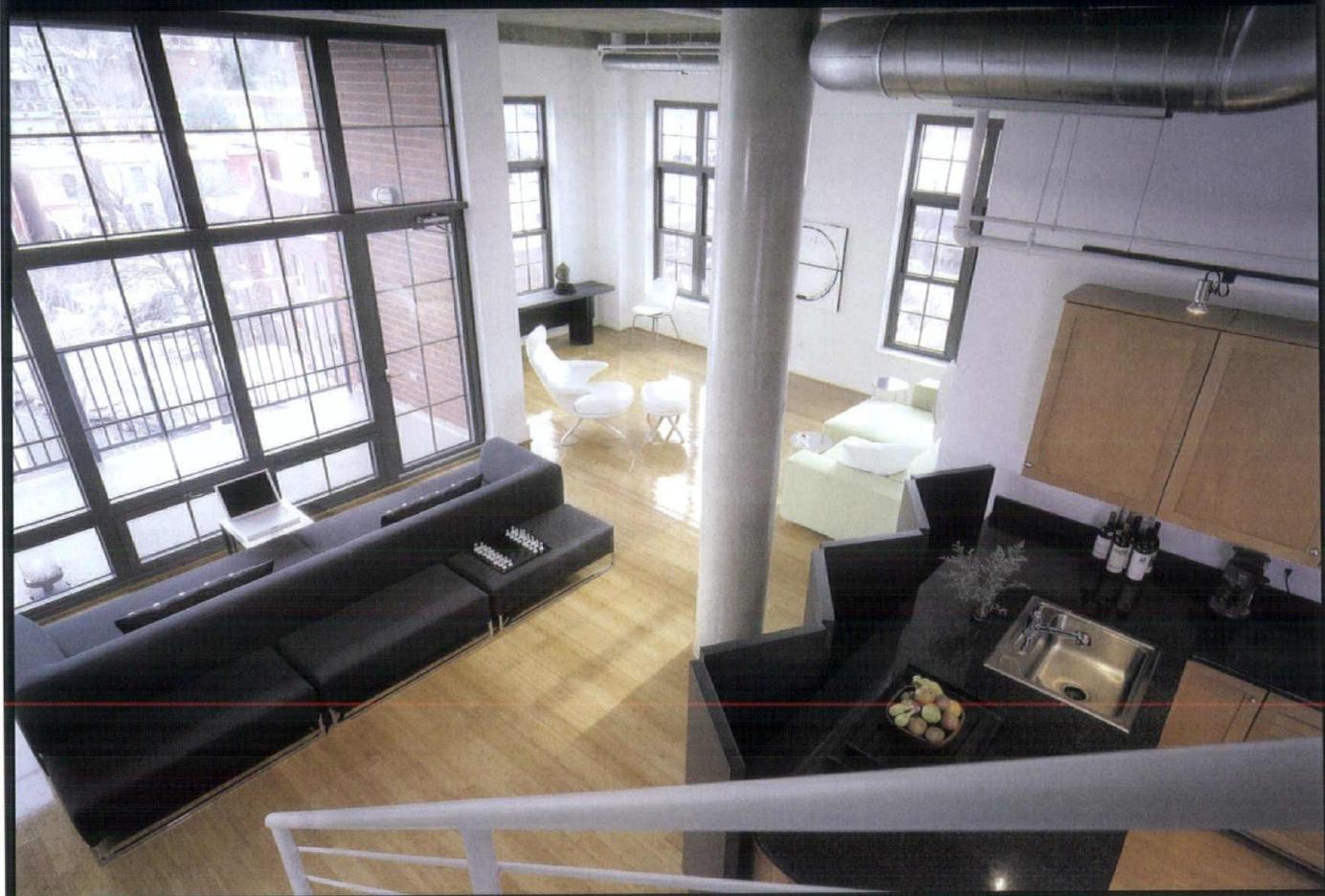
Inside is a standard plastic trash can in front, with a sheet metal container custom-built to fit the space behind. To dispose of trash, one simply opens the cabinet door and tosses it into the trash can. Opening the drawer front reveals a chute down which to roll bottles and cans to the sheet-metal container.

Both the door and drawer front have pulls that match the rest of the cabinets. The cabinet front frame also has a pull, so the whole unit can be swung wide to remove both containers on trash day.

My wife didn't like the fact that the bottom of the white trash can was visible, since there was no cabinet base (it would just be in the way). So I covered the trash can with wood-grain vinyl contact paper. Now it blends right in and my wife is happy! ☺

Carlisle Slocum Bean, AIA

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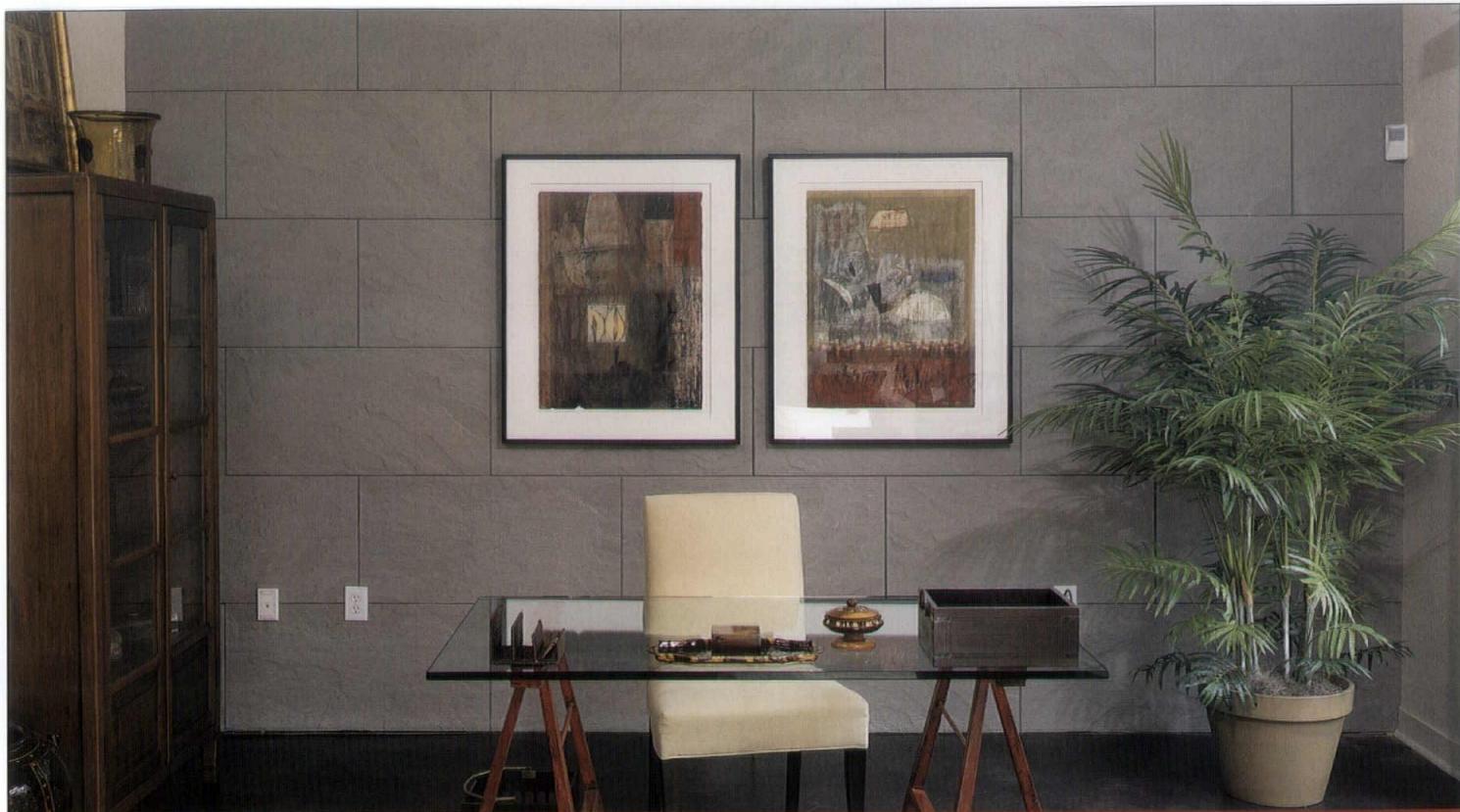
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We are especially grateful to the architecture firms shown in color, who have helped sponsor this annual summer residential issue of *ARCHITECTUREDC*.

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Educational Facilities – 5%
Food/Entertainment Facilities – 5%



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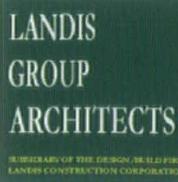
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Interiors – 5%

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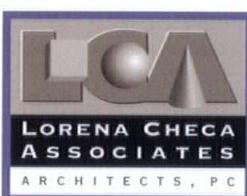
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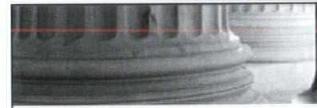
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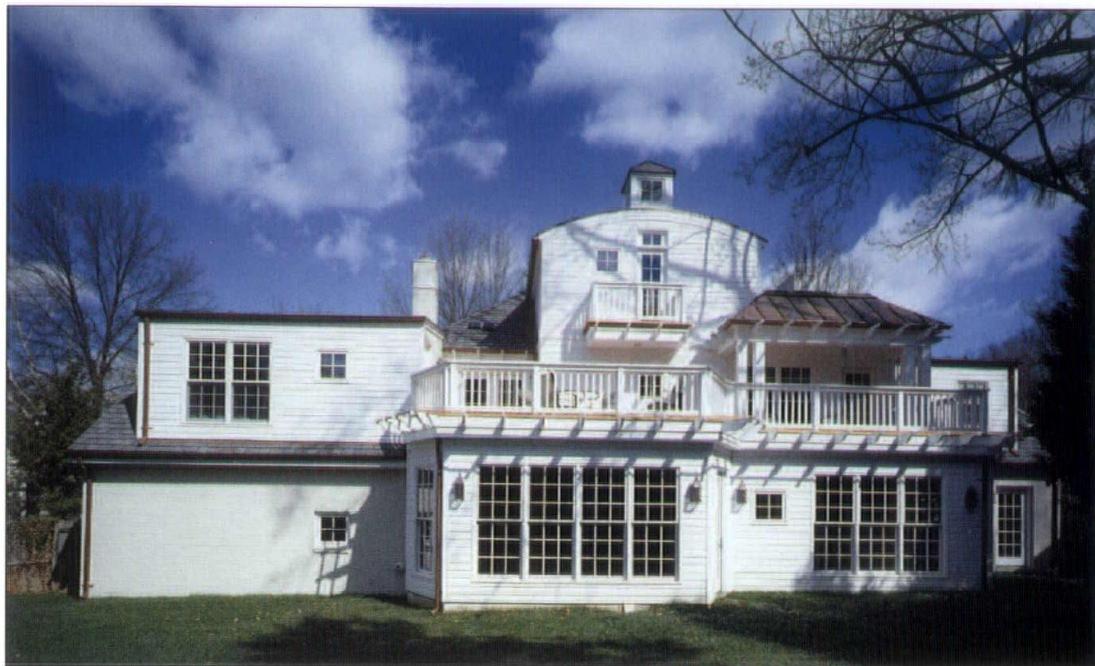
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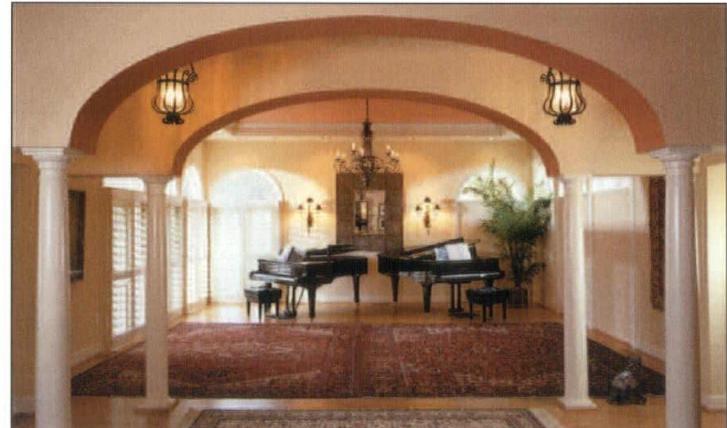
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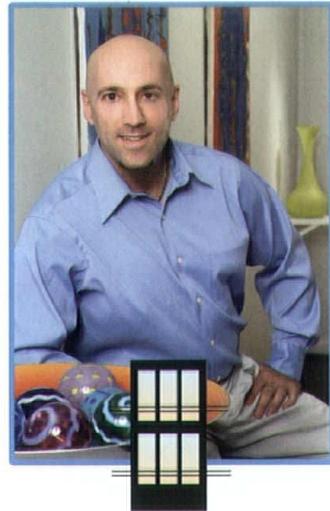
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